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THE CHINESE "AMERICAN DREAM" AT THE TURN OF 21ST CENTURY: A CASE STUDY OF CHINESE-AMERICAN'S HOMES IN MADISON, WISCONSIN

BY

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B.S.L.A., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1994

THESIS

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Abstract

The purpose of the research is to examine the meaning and relationship of home environments and identity through a case study of both exterior and interior personalization of homes of Chinese immigrants. It studies Chinese immigrants' perceptions, attitudes, and behavior towards their housing environment in America. The primary objective was to examine how people experience and decorate their homes as a way of expressing their personal and socio-cultural identity. The study assessed the physical characteristics and symbolic meaning of sixteen homes of Chinese immigrants in Madison, Wisconsin. The research findings show that interior decoration and gardening practices are influenced by feng shui, Confucian ideals, and the need to retain social ties with extended family and friends in China and Taiwan.

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Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction.....1

Purposes and Significance.....1

Chapter Two: Literature Review.....5

Culture and Environmental Design Research.....5

Home and Culture.....6

Vernacular Gardens.....8

Personalization in Houses and Gardens.....11

Chapter Three: Chinese Homes, Gardens, and Feng Shui.....13

Comparison of American and Chinese Homes.....13

Chinese Residential Gardens.....17

Influence of Feng Shui on House Orientation, Interiors and Gardens.....21

Chapter Four: Research Method and Sample.....26

Research Method.....26

Research Sample.....27

Chapter Five: Case Studies of Chinese-American Dwellings in Madison, Wisconsin.....31

Chapter Six: Constructing and Expressing Identity in Dwellings.....87

Housing Preference.....87

Housing Adjustment and Adaptation.....88

Interior Decoration.....90

A. Meaning of Objects.....91

B. Changing Meanings of Objects in Environmental Transitions.....95

Gardening Practices....97
Cultural Continuity....101
A. Feng Shui....101
B. Chinese Philosophy and Religion....102

Chapter Seven: Conclusions....105
Identity Dimensions....105
Implications....110
Conclusion....111

Bibliography....113

Appendix A. Interview Guide....121
Appendix B. Common Perennials in Chinese-Americans' Gardens....123
Appendix C. Common Annuals in Chinese-Americans' Gardens....124
Appendix D. Common Herbs in Chinese-Americans' Gardens....125
Appendix E. Common Vegetables and Fruits in Chinese-Americans' Gardens....126
Appendix F. Common Plants Chinese Used to Grow in China and Taiwan....127
Appendix G. Common Indoor Flowering Plants in Chinese-Americans' Homes....128
Appendix H. Common Indoor Foliage Plants in Chinese-Americans' Homes....129

List of Illustrations

1. Home is house and garden....3
2. The dynamic relationship of people & physical environment 5
3. Single family houses 13
4. Apartment building 13
5. Single family home 14
6. Suburban single family neighborhood 14
7. Typical floor plan of an apartment in China 15
8. Birds-eye view of Tianyuan Villa, Tianjin, China 15
9. Four models of homes in Tianyuan Villa, Tianjin, China....15
10. Neighborhood layout, Tianyuan Villa, Tianjin, China 16
11. Central axis of Chinese vernacular houses....17
12. High walls of Chinese vernacular houses 17
13. Chinese Garden, Montreal Botanical Garden, Canada 17
14. Chinese Garden, Montreal Botanical Garden, Canada 17
15. Chinese Character of "garden"....18
16. Winding pathways lead to unfolding scenery 19
17. Traditional Chinese garden 19
18. Traditional Chinese garden is a comprehensive art 19
19. First floor gardens of an apartment building, Nanjing, China 20
20. Mirror and flower arrangement cumulate positive energy 24
21. Fish tank is a popular decoration element 24
22. Downtown Madison 27
23. Farmer's market and spring tulips on Capitol Square 28
24. Farmer's market 28
25. The house is surrounded by open lawn and dense tree canopy 31
26. Front entrance 31
27. Windchime at the front entrance 31
28. Dinning room 32
29. Basement artist's gallery displaying her paintings and sculptures 32
30. Dried bamboo in the classroom 30
31. Bamboo calligraphy scripts 33
32. Flower garden 33
33. House and garden plan 34
34. Living room 35
35. The daughter's playing flute 35
36. Dining room 35
37. Daughter's stuff animal collection 36
38. Calligraphy scroll 36
39. Tulips border the house 36
40. House and garden plan 37
41. Chinese paintings as a decorative theme 38
42. Chinese paintings displayed in the living and dining room 38
43. Chinese paintings displayed in the living and dining room 38
44. Green Bay Packers wall paper 39

45. Gardening for birds 39
46. House and garden plan 40
47. View from street 41
48. Plants border the walkway 41
49. Front garden 41
50. Silk flower arrangements in the living room 41
51. Living room 41
52. Garden fence and plants 42
53. Patio-outdoor living 42
54. Decorative plate 42
55. Garden design 42
56. House and garden design 43
57. Home front view 44
58. Herb garden 44
59. Herb garden 44
60. Rock garden 44
61. Climbers and rock garden 45
62. Vegetable garden and flowering plants under deck 45
63. Vegetable garden 45
64. House and garden plan 46
65. Chinese character of "spring" 47
66. Chinese goddess statues 47
67. Large potted plants decorated living room 48
68. Bamboo anchors the room corner 48
69. Chinese fan with horse painting in the living room 48
70. House and garden plan 49
71. House and front yard 50
72. Play structure in the back yard 50
73. Chinese painting 50
74. A stuffed panda by the son's bed 51
75. Living room 51
76. Blooming lilacs and fruit trees 51
77. Grape vines embrace the deck 51
78. House and garden plan 52
79. House and front yard 53
80. Family altar and Buddhism shrine 53
81. Chinese goddess statue 53
82. Sacred place above the fireplace 54
83. Summer barbecue on the deck 54
84. Flower bed at the main entrance 54
85. House and garden plan 55
86. Large potted plants in the dining room 56
87. Chinese decoration in living room 56
88. Chinese Buddha statue in the living room 57
89. Silk lotus and flower arrangements 57
90. Buddhism shrine in the master bedroom 57

91. House and garden plan 58
92. House and open front lawn 59
93. Sculpture and Chinese crafts 59
94. Fenced back yard as children's playground 59
95. Climbing roses 60
96. House and garden plan 60
97. House and front yard 61
98. Living room 61
99. Kitchen 61
100. Stuff animal collection in the master bedroom 62
101. Perennial garden and vegetable garden 62
102. House and garden plan 63
103. House and front yard 64
104. Chinese Painting on the wall 64
105. Flowering garden 65
106. House and garden plan 66
107. Front yard 67
108. Buddha sculpture 67
109. Blooming tulips 68
110. House and garden plan 69
111. House facade 70
112. Wallpaper with Chinese calligraphy 70
113. Formal dining room 70
114. Silverware collection 71
115. Sunken living room 71
116. Animal sculpture in living room 71
117. Log cabin style family room 71
118. Master bedroom 72
119. Basement bar 72
120. Deck to the garden 72
121. Blue heron and cattail sculpture 72
122. View to the pond 72
123. House and garden plan 73
124. Exterior view 74
125. Buddhism shrine in the living room 74
126. Living room serves as meditation room 74
127. The design of wood panel is derived from a traditional Chinese pattern 74
128. Buddhism shrine consists of paintings and sculptures of Buddha 75
129. Lotus scroll in the master bedroom 75
130. Lotus silk flower arrangement 75
131. Lotus light 75
132. Lotus window decoration 76
133. Painting of Buddha 76
134. Special collection of Buddha paintings 76
135. Books on Buddhism 76
136. Flower planters symbolize Buddha's arms 76

137. Potted plants 77
138. Black-eye susan 77
139. Rock garden 77
140. House and garden plan 78
141. Front view 79
142. View from vegetable garden to the house 79
143. Flower boxes on the deck 79
144. Spring and summer flowers on the deck 80
145. Barbecue on the deck 80
146. Quiet retreat on the deck 80
147. The daughter's painting 81
148. Family photos 81
149. Fish tank and doll collection 81
150. Orchids 81
151. Plant used as a decorative element 82
152. Plants decorate the bedroom 82
153. Blooming Amerililly in the living room 82
154. Front flowering gardens 83
155. Front flowering gardens 83
156. Front flowering gardens 83
157. Bleeding heart embraces the front entrance 84
158. Peach tree is full of peaches 84
159. Vegetable garden 84
160. Vegetable garden 84
161. Planting pear trees in the orchard 85
162. House and garden plan 86
163. Bedrooms are highly territorial spaces 89
164. Westernized interior decoration 90
165. Silk lotus represents endurance and uprightness 90
166. Silk flower arrangements signify wealth 91
167. Religious books 92
168. Horse decoration derived from a famous Chinese Painter's work 93
169. Chinese batik wall hanging 93
170. Chinese painting 93
171. Posters and photography as objects for social exchange 94
172. Linda enjoys working in her garden 94
173. Linda enjoys working in her garden 94
174. Linda's indoor plants 95
175. Wedding photos 95
176. Bookshelf full of Chinese books 96
177. Chinese calligraphy 96
178. Chrysanthemums in a home garden in Nanjing, China 97
179. Gardeners transforming their backyards 98
180. Plants are added to the gardens every year 98
181. Vegetable garden 98
182. Climbers in the garden 99

183. Stepping stones in the rock garden 99
184. Gardener's paradise 100
185. Rock garden 100
186. Mirrors are used to generate positive chi 101
187. Using mirrors 102
188. Silk flowers in a Chinese vase 102
189. Windchimes and bells 102
190. Family altar brought from China 103
191. Traditional Chinese goddess 103
192. Buddhism shrine consists of Buddha statues 103
193. Various Buddha statues 103

Chapter One: Introduction

Since the end of the Second World War, the free-standing single-family house has been at the center of the American Dream. The assertion of a fundamental right to a decent home has been a basic tenet of the American way of life (Wright, 1981). Meanwhile, social and demographic patterns have changed constantly due to immigration, so that many communities have large enclaves of relatively affluent home-owning immigrants. Chinese immigrants make up one of the largest ethnic groups, in part because of the large number achieving permanent residency in the past few years. Many Chinese have entered housing markets and become homeowners across the country.

This newly emerging phenomenon places Chinese values in direct contact with the American Dream—the single-family detached house. This thesis will explore the concept of the home—house and garden, as an expression of personal and group identity. It will also address whether these homeowners combine their Chinese cultural heritage with western life styles and how.

I have selected Madison, the capital of Wisconsin, a culturally diversified college town as my study site. The University of Wisconsin-Madison attracts a large number of international students and scholars to study and research every year. Chinese from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong are one of the largest ethnic groups among the international population. Thus Madison provides an ideal setting and great opportunities for an in-depth investigation of Chinese immigrants' homes. Both interior and exterior personalization of the house and garden of sixteen Chinese immigrants' homes in Madison will be examined.

Purposes and Significance

Home environment has the richest social and cultural meanings embedded in it. Designers need to be sensitive to these meanings and take them into account when creating new environments. As Rapoport (1989) points out, culture-supportive environments are important, and the design for cultural specificity is desirable for residents. According to Alexander et al. (1977), Greenbie (1981), and Zeisel (1973), designers should be more sensitive to the role that housing may play in identity management. Moreover, they argue that designers should be aware of implications of the

built form for both culturally defined levels of intimacy and the social staging of transitions from public to private spaces. Social and cultural processes mediate the relation of home environment and identity. Dwellings, as meaningful objects and settings, become nonverbal signs for defining and communicating identity in modern society.

The thesis will explore the role of 'dwelling' in the construction of personal and group identities:

A. Personal identities: Self and personalization; and

B. Group identities: Membership in a socio-economic group, dwelling as cultural setting, gender identity.

These identities are negotiated in the social psychological processes of privacy and territoriality. They have a temporal dimension—that is especially the case with an immigrant.

This study will help us to understand how the process of cultivating identity through dwellings takes place among Chinese immigrants in contemporary American society. Furthermore, it will help us understand the contradictions and conflicts that immigrants may experience through identification with their homes. The study will help us better understand to what extent Chinese immigrants' houses and gardens are shaped by their culture heritage. It will aid in Chinese residents understanding of how to fit their homes to their current life styles. It will also provide valuable insights to real estate professionals who are interested in increasing sales to Asian clients.

We do not know very much about the meanings of dwelling and identity among certain subcultures. As Hummon (1989) argues "greater understanding and sensitivity to the way that housing and identity interact in the context of specific cultures and groups can contribute to the design of housing that nourishes rather than limits human life." Thus this research might fill an essential part of the knowledge gap about housing and Chinese subculture in the United States in the field of cultural issues in housing.

I became interested in exploring how the environment is used and adapted to by different cultures since I came to the United States in 1991. The brand-new life experience in America opened a new door in my awareness about the day-to-day living environment. I have been seeking

an answer to these questions—What are the similarities and dramatic differences among Chinese and American cultures in their ways of living? What kind of cultural norms are behind these similarities and differences? What can we learn from these cross-cultural findings in order to build a more culturally sensitive environment? It is increasingly apparent that an understanding of human behavior is not fully achieved through the study of physical settings within one's own culture. It also requires identification of similarities and differences among cultures.

The study is based upon a dialectic perspective and is influenced by the premise that human-environment relations are in a continual process of growth and evolution. Human-environment relationships are a never-ending process of coping, adjusting, and readjusting. An appreciation of their dynamics can facilitate the creation of a better fit between environment and their users. There is no doubt that cross-cultural studies help us better understand, respect, and accept similarities and differences among people of the world.

The study will help us to understand the link between identity and 'physical world' at the domestic level: the garden and the house. It helps us to understand the significant role of gardens in people's lives. For many people, gardens and yards are perceived as a means to strengthen the domestic ties. Their existence enhances the pleasure of the house. Home is the house and when present, to an increasing extent its garden (Figure 1). It is very important for us to recognize the significance of nearby nature in a garden.

Figure 1. Home is house and garden

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the relationship of home environment and identity through a study of both interior (house) and exterior (garden) personalization of homes. A primary objective is to study how people experience and decorate their homes as a means of expressing their personal and socio-cultural identity. For the purpose of this study, "home" is defined as the house and its garden.

The garden-as a significant part of the home-has been neglected in housing literature and in recent environment-behavior research on the concept of"home". The psychological impact of

gardens, extends our understanding of how they are part of the home and play a part in the process of the dwelling. It is my intention to integrate two apparently disparate areas of environment-behavior research: attachment to house and home, and the meaning of gardens. I do the above within the context of Chinese immigrants' perceptions, attitudes, and behavior towards their housing environment in America.

Our houses and gardens are places that reflect essence of culture: our aesthetic preferences and philosophy of life. Clearly, each ethnic group has its own cultural identity. Buddhism and Chinese philosophy such as Confucianism and Taoism have not only left their imprints on traditional housing forms and garden designs in China, but also have shaped Chinese behavior and thinking patterns. When these come into contact with Western values, the result can be conflict and compromise.

As we know, houses and gardens are subject to constant adaptation, modification, and management by their owners; they are therefore subject to changing tastes, changing functional requirements, technologies and life styles. Consequently, the contemporary house and garden is likely to have changed in many details from the house and garden of past generations. I am interested in exploring to what extent interior personalization and gardening practices are remnants of Chinese traditions or assimilation of cultural and environmental influences.

The thesis is organized into seven chapters. Chapter one introduces the thesis topic. Chapter two discusses research literature from a broad range of disciplines to establish a theoretical framework upon which the study is based. Chapter three examines the Chinese homes, gardens, and influence of feng shui on the dwelling to provide a comparative base for further analysis of present day Chinese-American homes in Madison, Wisconsin. Chapter four describes the research method and a sample. Chapter five consists of detailed observations of sixteen Chinese-Americans homes in Madison. Qualitative analysis in chapter six outlines the important issues related to the process of adaptation to the new home environment. Finally, chapter seven summarizes the key findings and examines group and personal identities expressed through interior decoration and gardening practices.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Culture and Environmental Design Research

While environment and behavior studies proliferated in the last two decades, research on the cultural similarities and differences in relation to the physical environment is limited. There are complex relations among people, culture, and the physical environment that form an integrated social system (Figure 2). There is a dynamic interplay of people, culture and the physical environment. They blend together as a unity, each influencing and being influenced by others (Altman & Chemers, 1980). Issues such as how the environment is used by and adapted to by different cultures deserve in-depth investigation from a cross-cultural perspective. Systematic analysis of psychological and behavioral processes in relation to the environment should shed light on our understanding of how the environments that people create reflect and shape the cultures in which they live.

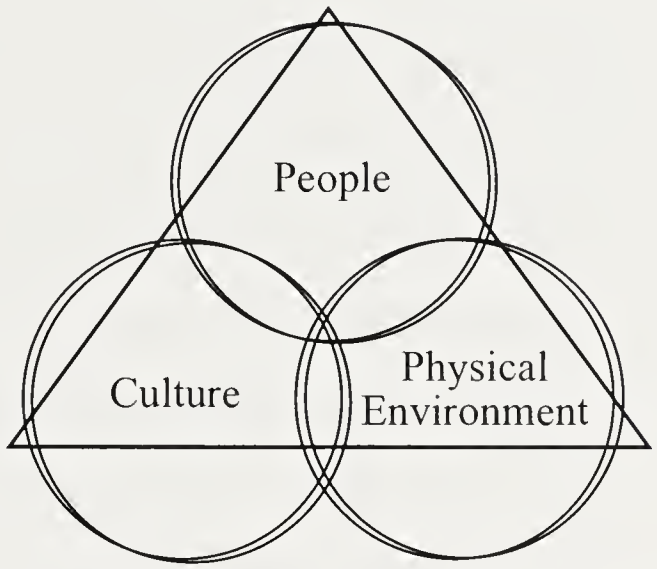


Figure 2. The dynamic relationship of people, culture & physical environment

The study of culture and environment has an important impact on the study of environment and behavior. Many researchers have explored the importance of environmental design in relation to culture--a critical issue in designing for other cultures. Their research findings help us to develop further cultural analysis within the larger context of environmental design research, a field of applied research concerned with improving the quality of physical environments for human habitation through design. We, as designers, are facing an increasing challenge — how to create environments that support cultural values, permit cultures to blossom in new settings, and foster the growth and well-being of individuals.

According to Irwin Altman and Martin M. Chemers in *Culture and Environment* (1980, p. 316), "Cultures vary widely in their orientations to the physical environment — perceptually, cognitively, and behaviorally — and we cannot possibly design effective environments for others unless we have a genuine appreciation of their relationships with their environments." We must

understand the culture from its own perspective — assess cultural needs and practices, and understand the cultural values, norms, and behavior. Design should be responsive to the needs, practices, and life styles of its users.

Not only is the input of specialists from many disciplines crucial in the design of environments for other cultures, but also the contribution of the consumer, or user. User participation is very useful to the design process, because users can help develop design proposals using their distinctive perspective on everyday life.

There are many ways that knowledge about culture and environment relations can contribute to the design of real world environments. The challenge we face is to design or redesign environments in ways that will not ignore cultures, but will be compatible with a social or ethnic heritage.

Most importantly, environmental designers should learn to appreciate and understand the intimate linkage of culture and environment. We need to consciously avoid the tendency of interpreting the world in terms of our own culture, experiences, and assumptions. We should try not to interpret the behavior and customs of others from our own perspective. As designers, we face great challenges in achieving success in designing because of the complexity of these issues. More studies on culture and environment will help establish a broad and comprehensive approach of integrating cultural factors into environmental design.

However, even though input of specialists from many disciplines and users themselves would be of great help, the filter called "culture" is not easy to decipher, not to mention its integration into environmental design. This is especially true for a "foreign" architect.

Home and Culture

Homes, neighborhoods, and communities are important places that people have created over the course of human history. They are symbolic "hearts of our lives" and we usually invest strong emotional attachments and meanings with these special places. By examining the location, design and use of such places, we can understand in-depth about how cultures around the world are similar and different in their relationship to the physical environment.

Among these places we create, the home is one of the most significant physical environments. Home is the central point of reference in orienting oneself in the world (Rapoport, 1981). It often serves as a psychological center. It reflects an array of cultural values and beliefs in a society such as worldviews, religion, mythology, social hierarchy, and family structure. Home environment has the richest social and cultural meanings embedded in it. It contains the most evidence about the everyday lives of people. Many contemporary Americans link dwelling place and identity in their thinking. The house expresses the identity of its resident through its form, style, interior, and exterior decoration. It is not surprising that both designers and social scientists have explored this topic with increasing frequency since the 1970s. Notable work can be found in anthropology (Perin 1977), environmental psychology (Altman and Gauvain 1981), geography (Cooper 1974; Duncan 1982; Relph 1976; Seamon 1979), history (Cohn 1979; Wright 1981), sociology (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981), and the design professions (Alexander et al. 1977; Greenbie 1981; Hayden 1984; Rapoport 1982a). Social and behavioral issues such as privacy, territoriality, and home have been the focus of rigorous research.

However, a couple of writers, whose following studies are traditional settlements in non-western cultures, have attempted to suggest what critical lessons about dwelling place and identity in contemporary American culture should be learned from this wide-ranging work. In his book *House Form and Culture*, Amos Rapoport (1969) lays down a solid foundation for the field of housing and culture research. He proposes a conceptual framework for examining the great variety of house forms and the forces that shape them. He argues "that the house form is not simply the result of physical forces or any single causal factor, but is the consequence of a whole range of socio-cultural factors seen in their broadest terms." Accordingly, "Form is in turn modified by climatic conditions and by methods of construction, materials available, and the technology." (Rapoport, 1969, p. 47)

Another important work is Paul Oliver's *Dwelling* (1987). He believes that "dwelling is both process and artifact" which is the physical expression of "the process of living at a location" (p. 7). Through his examination of many dwellings from different cultures across the world, he concludes that human dwellings "represent the complex interaction of many aspects of culture

essential to specific societies." (p. 232) Dwellings also reflect people's belief and value systems, sometimes at a personal identification level, other times at the cultural level of the cosmic symbolism of the house, its location, and orientation. (p. 232) Oliver also points out that "societies and individuals attach significance to their dwellings" through built form, architectural details or craftsmanship. "Humane and appropriate housing will only be achieved when dwelling as artifact is again possible for every culture through the fully realized potential of dwelling as process." (p. 233)

Furthermore, Clare Cooper elaborated the idea of the home as a symbol of individual self. In her article *The House as a Symbol of Self* (1974), she suggests interesting relationships between the house form and interior decoration and owner's social-identity. In her recent book *The House as a Mirror of Self* (1995), she presents intriguing and powerful data about people and their domestic contexts, especially how people invest meanings in the process of personalizing their home environments. According to Cooper-Marcus, we not only use our homes to express something about ourselves on a conscious level, but we also express aspects of our unconscious in the home environment. A core theme is derived and further developed from C. G. Jung's concept of individuation, or striving toward inner wholeness-"that we are all-throughout our lives-striving toward a state of wholeness, of being wholly ourselves" (p. 10). Her findings support the notion that the house interior and its contents serve as a critical reflection of our ever-evolving spiritual and psychological self.

In searching for the deeper meanings of home, she concludes that our unique expression and extension of self into the surrounding natural and man-made environments have made home a very special place in our hearts and lives: it is indeed "a symbol of psychic wholeness". She further suggests that the places we create and live in are reflections of the lifelong process that we strive to be wholly ourselves, and in fact the home environments themselves have profound impacts on our life journey toward spiritual wholeness.

Vernacular Gardens

As a meaningful part of home, the garden is also the manifestation of owner's culture and

individuality, and connects us with nature directly. In "The Garden as Metaphor" (1987), Clare Cooper examines the multiple layers of meaning of gardens to our consciousness. She stresses the garden as a place to cultivate natural habitat, as an idea to represent power of nature and personal identity, and as a process to transform land on our home ground. She believes that the garden serves as "a significant symbol and metaphor", which indeed represents an ever-evolving spiritual self—a higher self of the owner.

Mark Francis and R. T. Hester (eds.) in *The Meaning of Gardens* propose dynamic frameworks of interpretation of the psychological, social, and cultural significance of the garden to the concept of home. The garden provides valuable insights on the relationship between nature and culture. It not only represents a natural setting with opportunity to express power, creativity and individuality, but also embodies the sacredness of heaven in traditional myths across different cultures. It not only shows that the process of cultivating nearby nature has profound impact on our spiritual wellbeing, but also reveals labor of love and human desires for beautification and personal expression. By examining how gardens are designed, used, perceived and valued, the authors reiterate the central theme that a garden as an inner landscape is an essential part of the home.

The investigation of folk gardening traditions, or vernacular gardens, is slowly beginning in the United States. Domestic Chinese-Americans' gardens have received little systematic attention to date. As a place for spiritual refreshment, and the expression of ideals, beliefs, and aesthetic values, the vernacular garden is a rewarding subject for interdisciplinary cultural studies. The gardens and yards of Chinese-Americans have been largely ignored by landscape architects and garden historians.

In *Caribbean Transformations*, Sidney Mintz (1974) attempts an examination of the social function and symbolic meanings of houses and yards among Caribbean peasants. According to Mintz, the house and yard together provide a setting for daily activities. However, "the house is far more than a fabrication of wood and thatch, the yard far more than a locale for the house." (p. 232) In fact, the house and yard serve as a concrete material representation of a particular set of cultural values that pertain to how Caribbean people interact and relate to each other. The yard is a natural

extension of the house, and the house is the living hub of the yard. He concludes that the "house and yard form a nucleus within which the culture expresses itself, is perpetuated, changed, and reintegrated." (p. 232) In terms of the dynamic relationship of house and yard, he further suggests that "the yard may be associated intimately with the house, and its land may have important ritual or kinship significance." "House and yard often have particular symbolic meaning for local people, though this may be implicit and little noticed by outsiders." (p. 234)

Richard Westmacott, in his book *African-American Gardens and Yards in the Rural South*, combines both systematic description and symbolic analyses to interpret African-American gardens in three southern rural communities—Georgia, Alabama and South Carolina (1992). The gardens he examines are actual living and working spaces where numerous household and community activities take place. Westmacott focuses on the concept of the garden as a place serving specific functional needs, and also expressing values, aesthetic preferences, and spiritual beliefs. The functions of the garden for food production, household chores, welcome, leisure, and entertainment are analyzed. The gardeners' memories and descriptions of their parents' gardens help to identify which patterns and practices truly are traditional. His study provides insights into understanding how African-Americans shaped and reformed their domestic space as their relationship to the land changed from a condition of slavery, to tenancy, and to land ownership. Through historical research, field observations captured in drawings and photographs, and oral interviews, Westmacott summarizes the characteristics of African-American gardening tradition in the rural south. He (1992) points out that layouts, decorative ornaments, and recycled materials in African-American yards are rich in meanings and associations for their owners. The yards are much more than a place of leisure. They are places where independence is asserted with extraordinary vigor and resourcefulness. They demonstrate that African-Americans hold strongly the agrarian values of hard work and self-reliance. The essential characteristics include: unselfconscious garden design; yards swept bare; shrubs set out as individual plants rather than in groups; the absence of hedges or foundation shrubs; and the reuse of appliances and other household objects as planters, plant stands, flower pits, and yard art. Westmacott concludes that many of these practices possibly began taking shape

in slave gardens and yards. And at least one, the bare-swept yard, may have originated in Africa. Together, these characteristics suggest aesthetic preferences and symbolic meanings that differ from gardening practices promoted in popular culture and found in other ethnic groups and among the wealthy.

Personalization in Houses and Gardens

The activity we call decorating social scientists call personalizing. Many theories exist exploring why people personalize their environment in ways that reflect their values, preferences, and self. According to White's theory of competence, personalization, or manipulation of one's microenvironment, facilitates the process of personal growth of one's sense of control (1969). Wohlwill approached the issue from a stimulus exploration perspective, and proposed that people's personalization needs may be an expression of their own desire for exploratory stimulation and increased levels of environmental complexity (1970).

Homes as primary territories are exclusively owned, occupied, and controlled by individuals on a long-term basis, and are critical to the lives of the users. For example, people build fences, gates, hedges, or putting names on doors to mark their territory. (Altman & Chemers, 1980). Scholars agree that personalization serves as a vehicle of expressing self and defining territory. Personalizing is marking our environment to let people know where our boundaries begin and end, and putting our personal stamp on a space and its contents. It is the human way of adapting to environments, making them fit us physically, psychologically and socially. Its main function is to express identity, to tell the world, and ourselves, who we are. According to Becker's study on housing (1977), personalization is one of the important factors in generating greater residential satisfaction for the residents.

Interior personalization and exterior personalization provide helpful hints to owners' personal preferences and individuality. Becker summarized many ways that students in dormitories personalize their interior: displaying objects, the furniture arrangement, housekeeping and cleaning practices. Commonly used decorations included reference items (maps & calendars), personal

interest and hobby items (sports posters, movie star or singer posters and pictures), aesthetic or decorative items (abstract paintings, landscape photography, crafts), personal value items (religious books, scripts, shrine), and entertainment items (TV, VCR, exercising equipment).

On the other hand, exterior personalization is also evident in many ways, such as gardening practices, displaying decorative objects at the front entrance, painting house facade, building a patio, porch or a deck as a transitional outdoor living room, and personalized mailbox. According to Bush-Brown's study of implementation of community "garden blocks" in Philadelphia (1969), exterior personalization such as gardens, and flower boxes, enhances social interaction between neighbors and help to create a sense of community.

Chapter Three: Chinese Homes, Gardens, and Feng Shui

Comparison of American and Chinese Homes

The United States has many subcultures derived from ethnic, socioeconomic, and regional differences. It is a society of immigrants. There are many subcultures different groups are related to. Consequently, a wide range of life styles and residential dwelling types coexists as well. Single-family detached houses (Figure 3), apartments (Figure 4), condominiums, duplex and triplex homes, co-housing and mobile homes, are among some of the most common homes people own or rent. In order to examine the present-day American home as a culturally distinct place reflecting environmental and cultural values, the scope of study has been limited to middle class single-family dwellings.

Figure 3. Single family houses

In American society, a home is traditionally a nuclear family of parents and children. In most cases, you will not find married grandparents living in the same household with their children. In addition, single grandparents live on their own until they have to move into assisted living facilities such as nursing homes. Young adults usually move out from their parents' home and live alone or with other friends before they get married. Many families move every three to five years to different geographic regions. Altman

Figure 4. Apartment building

and Chemers (1980) point out that the extraordinary mobility in American society makes it difficult for families and relatives to live closer. More importantly, they emphasize that "having one's own home and maintaining one's independence and individuality are central American values that might also have contributed to the practice of having single-family residences" (p. 182).

However, in traditional Chinese societies, it used to be very common for four generations to live together under the same roof. This living style is partly due to the very limited housing resources compared to the large Chinese population available to the general public . Furthermore, it reflects the traditional Chinese cultural belief that people should always retain a close family tie whenever possible— respect and take care of parents when they are old and let them help with the raising of grandchildren. The prevailing cultural ethics encourages the strong family bond between individual family members and calls for the extended kinship as a living style. As a result, it is a common practice that married couples live with their parents even in present-day Chinese society. The fundamental differences in family structures in Chinese and American societies reveal that their different living styles may have profound roots in the society's value system.

The single-family suburban American home is the modern vernacular type of home. (Figure 5 & 6). Most homes are usually built not by the occupants. Typical American homes include living rooms, bedrooms, kitchens, dining rooms and bathrooms with variations of other rooms such as family rooms, studies, guest room, and home office/studio. They have considerable specialization of function. This is in strong contrast to Chinese culture, where the same interior space is utilized for

Figure 5. Single family home

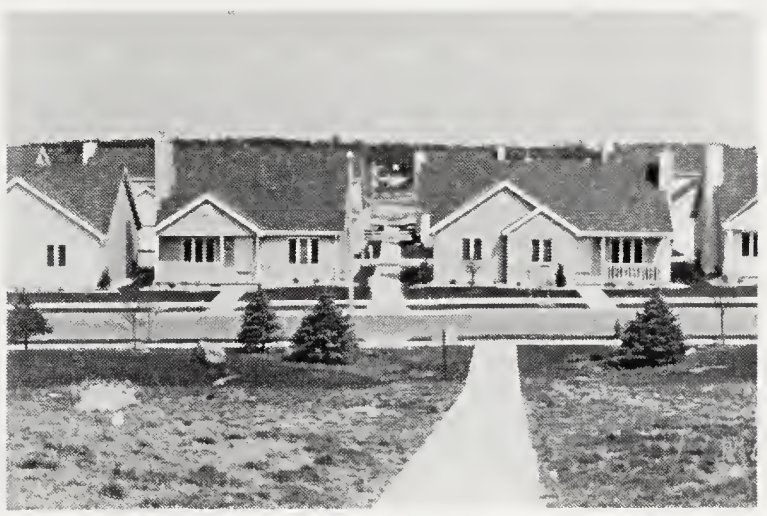


Figure 6. Suburban single family neighborhood

many functions.

Majority of Chinese in the city live in an apartment in a medium to high rise apartment building. The apartment typically consists of a small living room, a tiny kitchen (that two people can hardly turn around at the same time), a small bathroom (most of the time without a bathtub, maybe only a showerhead), and two to three bedrooms (Figure 7). Rooms may serve multiple functions at different times. For example, a bedroom with sofas may be used as a living room when guests come.

Figure 7. Typical floor plan of an apartment in China

Contemporary Chinese city neighborhoods are usually developed in a convenient location nearby the workplace such as a factory, a company or an university. For instance, I visited Tianyuan Villa in Tianjin which covers 84,000 square meters land, and vegetation and grass coverage is 58.3 percent (Figure 8). The pedestrian-oriented neighborhood consists of four different models of homes with a supermarket, recreation center, tennis court, bar, chess room, children's playground, and beauty shop (Figure 9 & 10). While very few rich people have bought cars, majority of residents rely on public transportation, taxies and bikes. Residents pay more and

Figure 8. Birds-eye view of Tianyuan Villa, Tianjin, China

Figure 9. Four models of homes in Tianyuan Villa, Tianjin

Figure 10. Neighborhood layout, Tianyuan Villa, Tianjin

more attention to the public garden space of their apartment neighborhoods. The public garden serves as nearby nature and centerpiece of the neighborhood, and is maintained by gardening professionals.

When I went back to China in September 1998, I also visited more than ten homes, and found that living conditions have improved since I left China seven years ago. People feel they have more privacy than before and they live in bigger apartments now. However, crowding is still a potential problem. The housing market has made rapid progress due to the recent economic reform. More and more high standard apartments are being built throughout the nation.

On the other hand, people from rural China usually live in traditional Chinese houses. Traditional Chinese domestic architecture is a true reflection of the life and culture of the Chinese people. It not only fulfills physical needs of living but also embodies rich meanings through its unique symbolic vocabulary. Many aspects of Chinese society, such as cultural, philosophical, and religious influences and life style of people have shaped the form, space and style of Chinese homes. The house, the basic unit of human settlement, represents a microcosm of Chinese private life, which is based upon Confucian ideas of hierarchy of generations and ethical code of patriarchal family structure. Like the Chinese city plan, most traditional Chinese houses have a central axis with main halls facing south (Figure 11). The general layout of the house symbolizes the power elders have over the younger generations. High, solid walls enclose the entire house, with only one or two doors leading to the street outside (Figure 12). The high wall provides privacy and serves as protection against fire and theft (Liu, 1989).

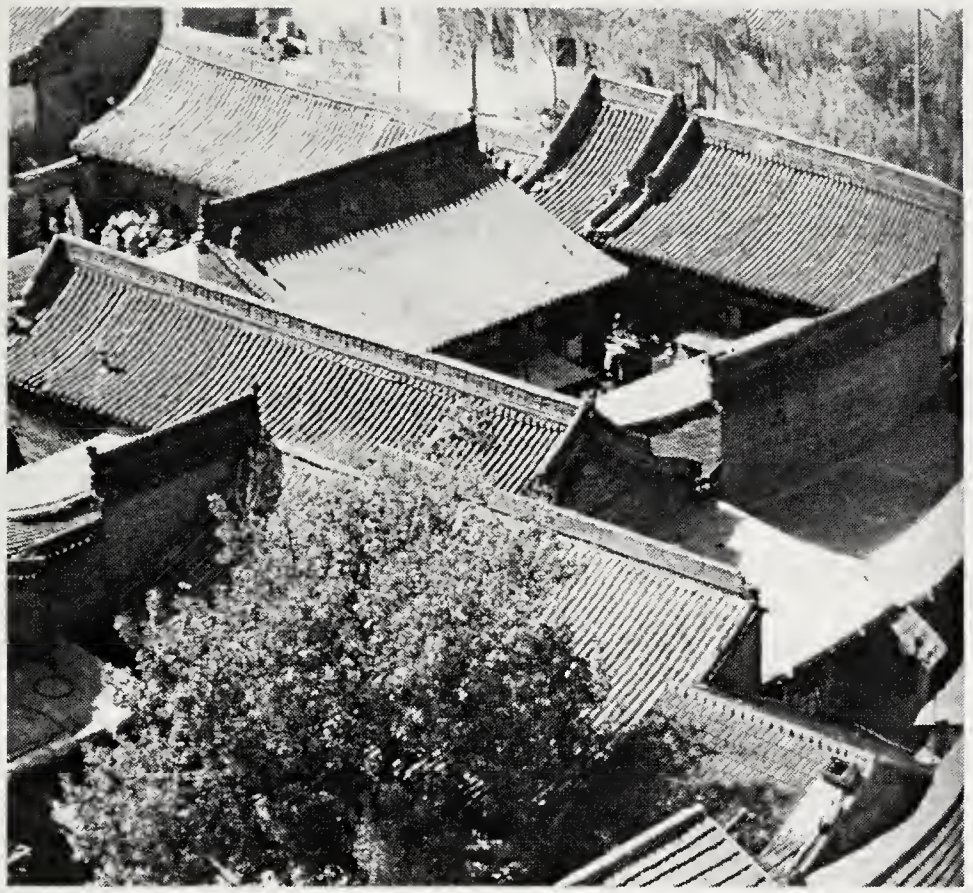


Figure 11. Central axis of Chinese vernacular houses

Figure 12. High walls of Chinese vernacular houses

Chinese Residential Gardens

Chinese cultural influence to the outside world may be evident from the Chinese garden widely constructed in the Western world. Since 1979, more than thirty-five traditional Chinese gardens of various sizes and designs have been built in fourteen countries across the world (Wang, 1998, p. 61). The Courtyard Chinese garden at Hawaii airport, Chinese garden at Montreal Botanical garden (Figure 13 & 14), the Half Garden at the National Botanical Garden in Washing-

Figure 13 & 14. Chinese Garden, Montreal Botanical Garden, Canada

ton, D. C., just to name a few. The Astor Court at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art is highly acclaimed for its skillful preservation of the charm of the eighteenth-century Dianchunyi Court in Wangshi Yuan, one of the most famous classical Chinese gardens in Suzhou. The phenomenon of the Chinese garden revival in the West reveals an universal human longing for spirituality and natural beauty. A classical Chinese garden serves as a mini replica of the natural environment, which inspires people to seek inner peace and happiness through contemplation.

In China, gardens have always been thought of as an interpretation of natural scenery. Taoism[1], Confucianism, and Buddhism, the three major religious and philosophical influences, emphasized the basic unity and harmony of man and nature. Chinese landscape painting also greatly inspired the development of Chinese gardens.

Since gardens were meant to represent nature, in an idealized form, in all of its richness and variety, two elements were always present: mountain and water, which were regarded as the skeleton and arteries of the mother earth. The classical Chinese garden does not apply axial symmetry. Rather, free flowing and organic spatial manipulations were prevailing design principles, which were mainly based on the philosophies of Taoism and the Chan Sect.

A house and garden form an organic whole in accordance with the principle of harmony with nature. The garden was always an integral part of the house. The Chinese concept of a home is explicitly expressed in the terms *yuanzhai* (garden-home) and *jiayuan* (home-garden). There are visual similarities between the plan of Chinese garden and the Chinese character of "garden"-*yuan*. In fact, *yuan* was abstracted and developed from the plan of classical Chinese garden. The Chinese character *yuan* can be dissected into meaningful parts symbolizing the organization and components of a

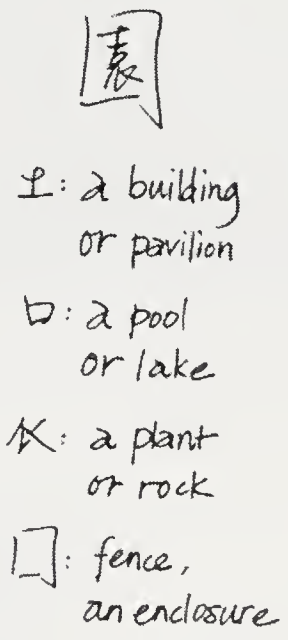


Figure 15. Chinese Character of "garden"

[1]Taoism, China's native religion, was established during the second century AD. Taoism teachings of compassion, humility, and unselfish endeavors are meant for happiness in an everlasting earthly life, not for life after death.

Figure 16. Winding pathways lead to unfolding scenery

garden: a building or pavilion, a pool or lake, a plant or rock, and a fence or an enclosure (Wang, 1998) (Figure 15).

A Chinese garden can never be encompassed in one glance. Instead, it invites you to follow winding pathways from one vantage point to the next, to truly enjoy the slowly unfolding scenery (Figure 16). Plant selection was not only for foliage, fruit, color, flower, or scent, but also for symbolic significance. Bamboo symbolizes longevity, durability and upright character and moral standards of a gentleman. Pine symbolizes lasting friendships that do not wither in adversity. The plum tree, which blossoms in cold winter, symbolizes strong personality and characteristics. Peony is a sign of good fortune. For centuries, garden designers favored great variety in

Figure 17. Traditional Chinese Garden

Figure 18. Traditional Chinese Garden is a comprehensive art

scenery, encouraged sensitive responses to individual site conditions, emphasized the importance of irregularity and asymmetry in design, fostered an appreciation to raw materials, and promoted elegance and simplicity in construction (Figure 17).

In summary, Chinese garden is a comprehensive art, comprised of a wide array of art forms such as architecture, garden design, painting, sculpture, poetry, and calligraphy (Figure 18). This unique marriage of art and garden is a centerpiece of Chinese culture[2]. In a sense, Chinese gardens are three dimensional representations of Chinese landscape paintings. The meaning of the Chinese gardens is particularly precious and valuable in today's fast-pace industrial and commercial world, where we lose touch with nature, and no longer have the sensitivity and open heart to appreciate the beauty of nature.

However, it is often forgotten that the classical gardens we see in China today were once parts of the private residences of high officials, mandarins and wealthy merchants. Typical middle-class Chinese never had a garden as elaborate and grand as these famous classical Chinese gardens. In fact, the influence of classical Chinese gardens on modern residential gardens is not evident. In contemporary Chinese cities, majority of middle-class families usually live in medium to high rise apartment buildings. Although gardening practice is a very popular hobby among general public, it is greatly limited by the lacking of outdoor gardening space in their home environments. Only first floor residents have a small patch of green space as their gardens (Figure 19). The garden space is very

Figure 19. First floor gardens of an apartment building, Nanjing, China

[2] Private gardens took form in China for the first time in the fifth century AD during the Northern Wei dynasty, which emphasized spiritual freedom in contrast to the materialistic pleasure that influenced the imperial gardens. The development of private gardens reached its climax during the eighth century (Wang, 1998). Cities such as Suzhou, Yangzhou, and Nanjing in Jiangsu province, as well as Hangzhou in Zhejiang province, became the center of cultural activities during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Many elegant private gardens were built in these cities and some of the most famous ones still show their charm to visitors today.

limited in size, some as small as only about 150 square feet. Most people who love gardening prefer a first floor apartment in order to continue their love of cultivating plants throughout seasons. Other garden lovers turn to their home interiors and grow a variety of potted plants to fulfill their green dreams. Many flowering plants decorate their window sills and balconies which are the primary "picture windows" to the outside world. There are some families live in relatively older, one or two-story apartment buildings, which offers precious garden space for the first floor residents. In general, the residential gardens are very loosely constructed, the most popular plants include chrysanthemum, dahlia, rose, poppy, peach, cherry, plum, and grape vine forming entrance trellis. The garden spaces are fenced and full of vegetables, ornamental trees, fruit trees, annuals and perennials. Some have outdoor fish tanks and dog houses. The more private back yard is an ideal place to do utilitarian household chore such as drying cloths, building furniture, and gardening. Homes are often decorated with fresh-cut flowers from their gardens.

Influence of Feng Shui on House Orientation, Interiors & Gardens

For centuries the Chinese have been using feng shui to create harmonious living environments that promote wellbeing. The aim of feng shui is to change and harmonize the environment—cosmic currents known as chi—to improve fortunes. Feng shui or Chinese geomancy has a long history of being an art of divination in China. It is concerned with worldly benefits and the avoidance of misfortune. Chinese traditionally utilized feng shui in selecting a building or a tomb site. The feng shui landscape places primary concern in harmony between human beings and landscape, between individual and cosmic destiny. In fact, feng shui is more commonly practiced by rural residents than urban residents in China. Chinese believe that good feng shui guarantees prosperity for the household. Decorative motifs carry these efforts forward to invoke good fortune to the benefit of the family and to warrant the household against malevolent forces. These decorative motifs, exterior as well as interior, may be pictographic or calligraphic. Feng shui is considered superstition by authorities in China. Fortunately, professional planners accede to much of the wisdom of traditional feng shui practice.

In general, feng shui principles provide valuable guidelines in site selection and building location, house configuration, and interior design. A good feng shui site is in harmony with nature and surroundings. Houses facing south are generally preferred. High ground and undulating land are recommended over valleys or low-lying land. Good influences accumulate when a house is backed on the north by a mountain with smaller hills on both sides. The back yard should be slightly but not too much larger than the front yard to offer protection and help the accumulation of wealth. The front lot should not be higher than the rear. Healthy trees, particularly on the north-west side of the site, indicate good chi and symbolize protection. However, a large tree or pole blocking the front entrance brings bad luck. Secret arrows such as edges of roofs, chimneys or sides of nearby buildings, which point directly at the site are undesirable. Dagger-like roads facing a house, or a building at the intersection of a "Y" junction lead to ill fortune. A home with a street pointed directly at it, such as a cul-de-sac or T intersection, is unlucky. It is also undesirable to have the driveway pointed directly at the front door. However, curved driveways optimize the flow of chi (Rossbach, 1983).

The overall shape and configuration of a house is an important feng shui consideration as well. A good configuration balances the five elements (metal, wood, water, fire and earth), promotes the circulation of chi and creates harmony with the surrounding environment. It is commonly believed that irregular shapes with many sharp angles are undesirable. Symmetrical buildings such as square, circular, or rectangular configurations are ideal. L-shaped, U-shaped or other irregular buildings are less desirable. An irregular building can be improved by adding a patio, deck, veranda or landscaping that balances the building and ties the space together. Steeply pitched roofs and sharp edges are not preferred. In general, south is the best direction that the front door should face. The path to the entrance should not be a straight line. Curved, meandering paths are desirable. Garage-dominated house is not preferred.

Feng shui practice also provide valuable insights about building facade and interior design. For instance, A double-door entrance is more favorable because it is symmetrical. However, entrance doors should be pleasingly proportional to the building dimensions. Doors should not be

obstructed by large trees, columns or poles. The front door should not be in line with rear doors or windows because chi will rush straight through and not circulate. Windows that open completely are better than those that slide up and down. Outward-opening windows are the most auspicious. Inward-opening windows are believed harmful to careers and wealth. Staircases should not face the front entrance or start immediately outside the master bedroom. Stairs that fit into the natural design of the house rather than intruding into the living space are best. Water, whether view through a window or reflected by a mirror, is believed to bring money into the house. Well-maintained fish tanks are used as an effective substitute for an exterior water source. Fireplaces, bedrooms, and bathrooms should not face the front door. Furniture should be arranged so those sharp angels don't point at doors, especially bedroom doors. Mirrors can be used to deflect harmful forces and draw positive chi into the house. However, they should not face the bed, especially the foot of a bed. Bed should be oriented so the feet don't point toward the door. In a bathroom, try to hide the toilet from view with a divider or by recessing it. Bathroom drains can draw chi out of the house. It is best to keep the toilet covered when not in use. A bathroom off the master bedroom should have a door to avoid having one's wealth flushed down the drain. The kitchen is a symbol of the family's wealth, health and prosperity. It should be well lit and regular in shape. Placement of furniture is an important part of feng shui practice. Moving around furniture, wall hangings, plants, sculpture and fish tanks can often dramatically change the look and feel of a room. Furniture should be arranged to allow free flowing of Chi through a room. Furniture that blocks natural walkways, overly cluttered spaces, or furniture that prevents doors from opening fully are especially harmful. It is also believed that we should avoid placing furniture under heavy beams.

Chi is believed as the life energy critical to our wellbeing. There are many basic remedies to alter, moderate, or raise chi. Used both inside and outside a building, these cures can resolve imbalances, improve chi circulation, and enhance person's life situations (Rossbach, 1991). Bright or light-refracting objects such as mirror, crystal ball, or lights are believed to be symbolic sources of positive energy (Figure 20). They can adjust a building's chi and symbolically resolve design imbalances. Sounds such as wind chimes and bells are moderators of chi flow. They disperse bad

chi, redirecting chi in a more beneficial and balanced way. Living objects such as plants (real or man-made), bonsai, and flowers, are symbolization of nature, life, and growth, cumulate nourishing chi throughout the room (Figure 20). Aquariums and fish bowls are microcosms of nature. Water — essential to the cultivation of rice — symbolizes money. When views of water are lacking, the aquariums and fishbowls are used to evoke nourishing and money-making chi (Figure 21). Wind-powered or electrically powered moving objects such as mobiles (interior) and windmills, whirligigs, and weather vanes (exterior) stimulate chi circulation and deflect the overbearing force of roads and long corridors. When heavy objects such as stones or statues are properly placed, they help stabilize an unsettling or elusive situation such as holding down a job or holding on to a spouse. Machines powered by electricity such as TV and stereo are used to stimulate surroundings. Bamboo flutes brings peace, safety, and stability to the surrounding. It is believed that they can drive away evil spirits. Colors can be useful in areas of a room or a building to enhance aspects of one's life. The Chinese consider certain colors more auspicious than others.

Figure 20. Mirror and flower arrangement cumulate positive energy

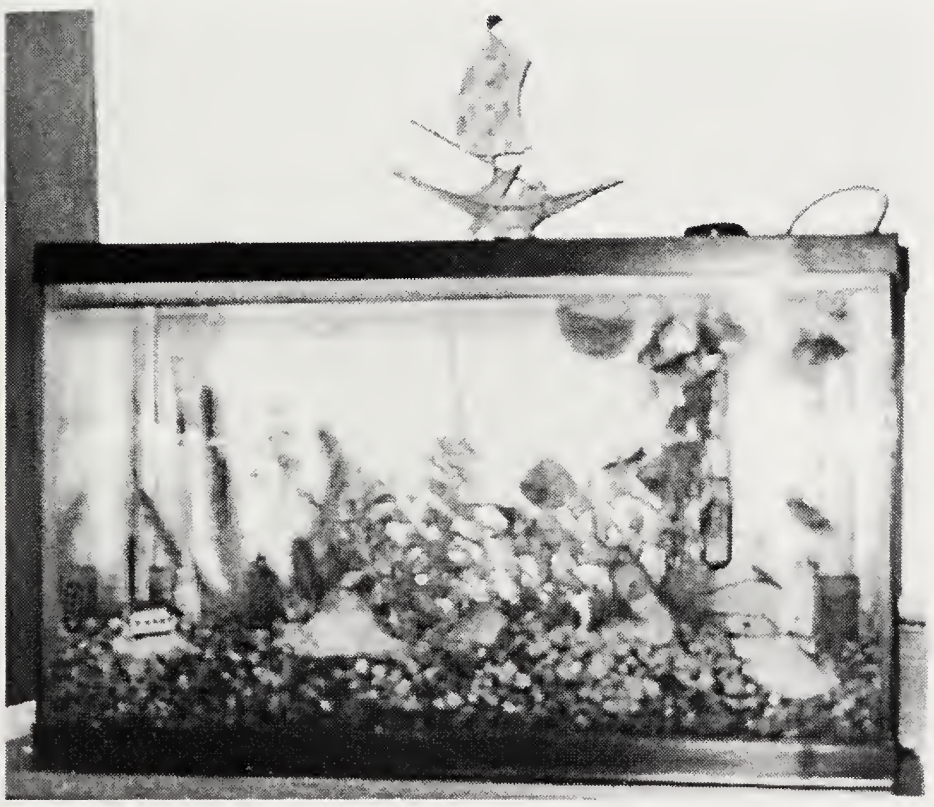


Figure 21. Fish tank is a popular decoration element

Red, commonly used in traditional Chinese weddings and other celebrations, is an auspicious color. Black is the color of the water element and represents money, however in general, black also signifies loss of light and is often avoided. White, the Chinese color of mourning, is avoided. Yellow, the color of sun, symbolizes longevity. Green, the color of spring, represents growth, freshness, and tranquility. Blue, representing the sky, is an ambiguous color. It is auspicious, yet sometimes because of its coolness, blue represents death (Rossbach, 1991).

Chapter Four: Research Method and Sample

Research Method

My thesis is that Chinese immigrants convey their personal and social identity through personalization of houses and gardens. It is based upon the assumption that house and garden correspond to social class, values and ethnicity as much as they express personal preferences. They are integral to and reflect a variety of social and cultural values regarding individual and family identities.

My primary research question is "In what way does the interior and exterior personalization of Chinese immigrants' homes reflect their identity?" I used personal interviews with residents and observations of homes to gather relevant information. Data was gathered using an interview guide in sixteen personal interviews. A face-to-face interview can motivate the respondent to answer fully and accurately. It also allows flexibility in interview schedules, with the possibility of extensive in-depth questioning about complex or multifaceted issues.

The procedure involved finding a list of potential interviewees, contacting them to decide interview time, conducting interviews, and analysis and interpretation of data. A pilot study of initial interviews of four families were conducted in 1995. The results helped identify salient issues regarding the physical environment and the identity of homeowners. Based upon them, an interview guide was developed which focused on social and cultural factors related to home environment such as privacy, safety, territoriality, personalization, and sense of home. The interview guide helped to collect information on residents' perceptions, attitudes, and preferences for their interior and exterior decoration of home environments. Variables such as family structure, residential experience, occupation, education, age, sex, years in the United States, religion, personalization, meaningful objects, interior changes, and personal taste were documented. Special attention was paid to interior and exterior decorations.

The setting was interviewees' homes—single-family houses in Madison, Wisconsin. Fourteen families were from the cities in China and Taiwan, and two families were from rural China. There are total nine families from China, and seven families from Taiwan.

Follow-up interviews about interviewees' images, meaningful objects, memories of past homes, and changes they made to both houses and gardens were informal, free-flowing, and conducted in Chinese. Interview data was later translated into English as closely as possible.

Qualitative content analysis was conducted on the data. The meaning of gardens and houses was interpreted in terms of the following: the relationship between identity and the home environment; the meaning of the objects in the domestic environment; spatial and temporal experience at home; and the control over the domestic environment. The research has practical implications as well. For instance, the modifications the homeowners have done provide helpful hints to the discrepancies in the domestic environment. The finding will direct us to improve housing design to better suit users' life styles.

Research Sample

Built on a narrow isthmus between two large lakes, Madison, the capitol of Wisconsin, is one of the most beautiful cities in the country (Figure 22). With a population of 200,000, it has been twice ranked the No. 1 city "Best Places to Live in America" by Money Magazine. Madison is also a college town. University of Wisconsin-Madison is located in the central part of the city. The City of Madison is nationally recognized for its high quality of life, vibrant economy, and diverse recreational opportunities. Summer art fairs and concerts on the capitol square draw people downtown to enjoy great outdoors and art activities. From May to November, the Saturday morning farmer's market is the oldest in the Midwest and one of the best in the country (Figure 23 & 24).

Figure 22. Downtown Madison

The target population is Chinese immigrants who have bought houses in Madison, Wisconsin in the past several years. Homeowners interviewed are between thirty to sixty years old, with

Figure 23. Farmer's market and spring tulips on Capitol Square

Figure 24. Farmer's market

occupations that include research specialists/faculty at University of Wisconsin-Madison, professionals in private firms, and self-employed business owners. In general, they have been in America for more than five years. It was the first time in their lives they moved into their 'American Dream Houses'. Sixteen homes were visited and twenty-nine homeowners were interviewed between 1995 and 1999. Most couples were interviewed at the same time.

Each interview was conducted at the interviewee's home. The interview time varied from an hour to two hours. A tape-recorder was used to record the interviews with the permission of interviewees. The records of conversations were kept confidential. Slides and photos were taken during the interview. The following is an overview of the home environments and people's life styles.

According to Padilla's study of the sample results of 381 Mexican immigrants, there are several factors contribute to higher speed of assimilation (1980, p. 74-77). Higher educational achievement, higher level of income, and lower density of minority population in a given area generate strong positive correlations with minority assimilation to the core culture. The findings of the Chinese interviewed in Madison support Padilla's conclusions. These first-generation immigrants are predominantly college graduates. Obtaining a higher level of education in the United States has enabled some of them to achieve higher incomes, which in turn makes suburban living possible. As a consequence, they are in frequent contact and interaction with Americans and the core culture.

The distribution pattern of their residence in Madison is relatively dispersed. Spatially, they do not depend on close proximity to people of their own culture either in their career or in their family life. Cultural exposure in American schools and various kinds of contacts at work and in social life have already paved the way to their acceptance of new ideas and customs. The findings in the interviews demonstrate that substantial cultural assimilation has happened to many of the Chinese in Madison. This was probably related to their spatial integration in American society.

For most Chinese people, close friendships are formed mainly among people of their own cultural origin, however, they have begun to establish close friendship with Americans as well. Some American friends are their business partners, some are their family friends. While their ties with their homeland are weakening, many have Americans as their guests at important family gatherings and parties such as Spring Festival, wedding and birthday parties. Their ties with American society are strengthening through frequent contact and exposure.

The sharp differences of the two cultures stand in stark contrast, and at times seem to be insurmountable. Most of my interviewees are first generation immigrants, thus the cultural imprints from their native culture are still very strong. It is very natural for all of them to communicate in Chinese at home. This behavior in turn helps them to retain and appreciate their cultural customs and norms. However, the younger generation of Chinese show signs of preferring to speak English with their parents, even at home.

In the process of adapting to a new life style in America, the Chinese immigrants need to adjust almost every aspect of their human existence, including world-view, personal belief, and behavior. The meaning of Americanization includes a functioning membership in the American society, and the assumption of attitudes and behavior patterns compatible with being a member of the American society, whether in discharging one's duties or in enjoying one's privileges. Membership in the society includes occupational competence for obtaining economic independence, clothing, residential pattern, and life style acceptable to a majority of other Americans, command of English adequate for occupational and social purposes. Attitudes and behavior patterns are changing as well. The most important concern of every individual is independence, autonomy, self-

expression, and self-development. Chinese immigrants accept the idea of being American, as synonymous with being progressive. Owning houses and cars, wearing Americanized clothes, eating American food and thinking the American way reflects their changing life styles. They like the freedom of choice (occupation, profession, association, and religion). Their unique individual identity is manifested through excellence in work, degree of social acceptance, self-esteem, and commitment to change.

In China, there is a humorous statement about Chinese immigrants visiting from the United States. "They dress in an out-of-date way, they speak Chinese mixed with English, they spend money like the poor." Although teasing in tone, most Chinese immigrants have to agree with the remark. Living many years in the United States, they are used to the American casual dress code--T-shirts, jeans for comfortable and relaxing feeling. When they visited China, they didn't dress up on purpose and their friends and relatives were surprised that they didn't appear rich at all. The Chinese immigrants do have a tendency to mix English phrases with Chinese ones when they talk with other Chinese in the United States. However, when they went back to China, if they spoke Chinese mixed with English phrases as usual, it caused confusion and gave the wrong impression of showing off their English. In terms of spending money, Chinese are well known for their ability to minimize expenses and save a good fortune in rather short period of time. This is also the reason why so many of my interviewees bought their first dream house after only five or six years in the United States. Their American friends were also impressed with their great accomplishment, commenting that five years ago when they left China with only two suitcases and a couple of hundred dollars, now that has grown into a lovely house and garden.

Charpter Five: Case Studies of Chinese-American Dwellings in Madison, Wisconsin

1. An Artist Studio, 1999

Ms. Chen, a well-established Chinese painting and watercolor painter, is from Taiwan. She came to the University of Wisconsin-Madison for her Master's degree in Fine Arts five years ago. Now she serves as a faculty member at the Frank Lloyd Wright Taliesin Architecture School in Spring Green, Wisconsin. She is also a visiting artist for several Universities in the United States and enjoys working with different groups of graduate students very much. Ms. Chen has published her works, and has had many solo and group exhibitions throughout the United States and Asia. She offers many levels of private Chinese painting classes at her home studio.

Figure 25. The house is surrounded by open lawn and dense tree canopy

Siting on a gently sloping hill among dense vegetation, the house is a quiet retreat from the busy outside world (Figure 25). Although nearby a street, the private drive meanders through the forest and leads you to the side yard. Dense tree canopy, shrubbery and blooming flowers provide very peaceful feeling when you approach the low eaves front door (Figure 26).

Figure 27. Windchime at the front entrance

Figure 26. Front entrance

A self-painted windchime using Frank Lloyd Wright color scheme graces the front entrance (Figure 27). The first floor has a master bedroom, living room, dining room, kitchen and bathroom.

The living room and dining room display many of her abstract paintings and sculptures. A Chinese antique wood desk displays her art works. Many potted plants on the shelf and a piano she plays are in the dining room (Figure 28).

Figure 28. Dining room

The basement is furnished as her studio space, which consists of a large living room and a classroom. The living room serves as her gallery displaying many of her large scale original paintings and interesting and innovative clay sculptures of human figures or abstractions (Figure 29). She combines her Buddhism meditation practices and dance movements into her color and ink paintings.

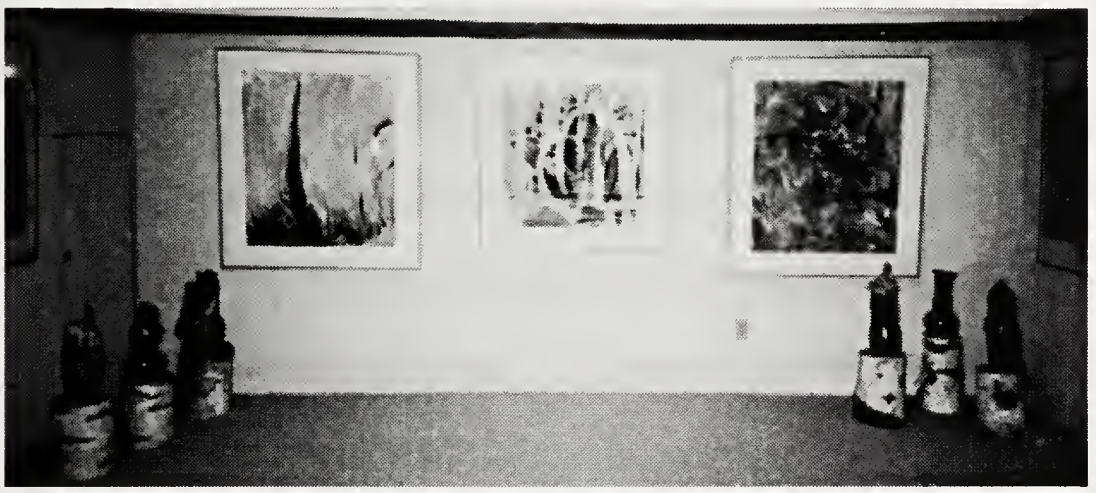


Figure 29. Basement artist's gallery displaying her paintings and sculptures

The classroom has eight wood square tables and chairs for students to paint. There is a long table used as her painting and demonstrating space. Behind her seat, dried bamboo branches and other flowers are used in class as painting objects and inspirations (Figure 30). A coffee maker and coffee mugs are on a nearby side table, and are served with delicious cookies and chocolate. Her class is very popular in Madison,

Figure 30. Dried bamboo in the classroom

and her students are mainly adult Americans who are busy professionals and enjoy exploring the endless possibilities of profound Ancient Chinese art. A pair of Chinese calligraphy scripts, carved on bamboo, hang on the wall and evoke a strong oriental decorative flavor (Figure 31).

Figure 31. Bamboo calligraphy scripts

She believes in the Tibetan Buddhism, and she retreats to a remote place to meditate and think about Buddhism philosophy every year. Several years ago, she lived and meditated in a Buddhism Temple in Southern California, without speaking a word for six months.

Ms. Chen's parents have strong Japanese traditions, and her house definitely evokes a distinctive meditative quality. Ms. Chen draws inspiration from traditional temple, folk architecture that deliberately honors the contemplative side of life. Elegant scrolls and a silk magnolia and cherry blossom arrangement add surprising flavor to the overall peaceful atmosphere. It is luxurious to have a space dedicated to ritual and meditation in the contemporary Western world. But it is the combination of practical with spiritual, that makes the home very special.

Her garden is mainly a natural landscape, consisting of many elegant flowering trees, shrubs and flowers. Vegetable garden consists of tomato, green pea, pepper, green onion, chives, and various Chinese greens. Annual and perennial flower beds border the entrance to the house. As a Chinese painting artist, floral painting is one of her specialties. Thus it is very natural for her to plant all kinds of flowers in the garden in order to keep inspiring her artistic self (Figure 32). Her favorite annual plants include poppy, petu-

Figure 32. Flower garden

nia, zinnia, and salvia. Perennials in her garden include irises, peonies, chrysanthemums, bleeding heart, daylily, just to name a few. She even tried to plant bamboo several times, unfortunately, bamboo can not survive the severe Wisconsin winter.

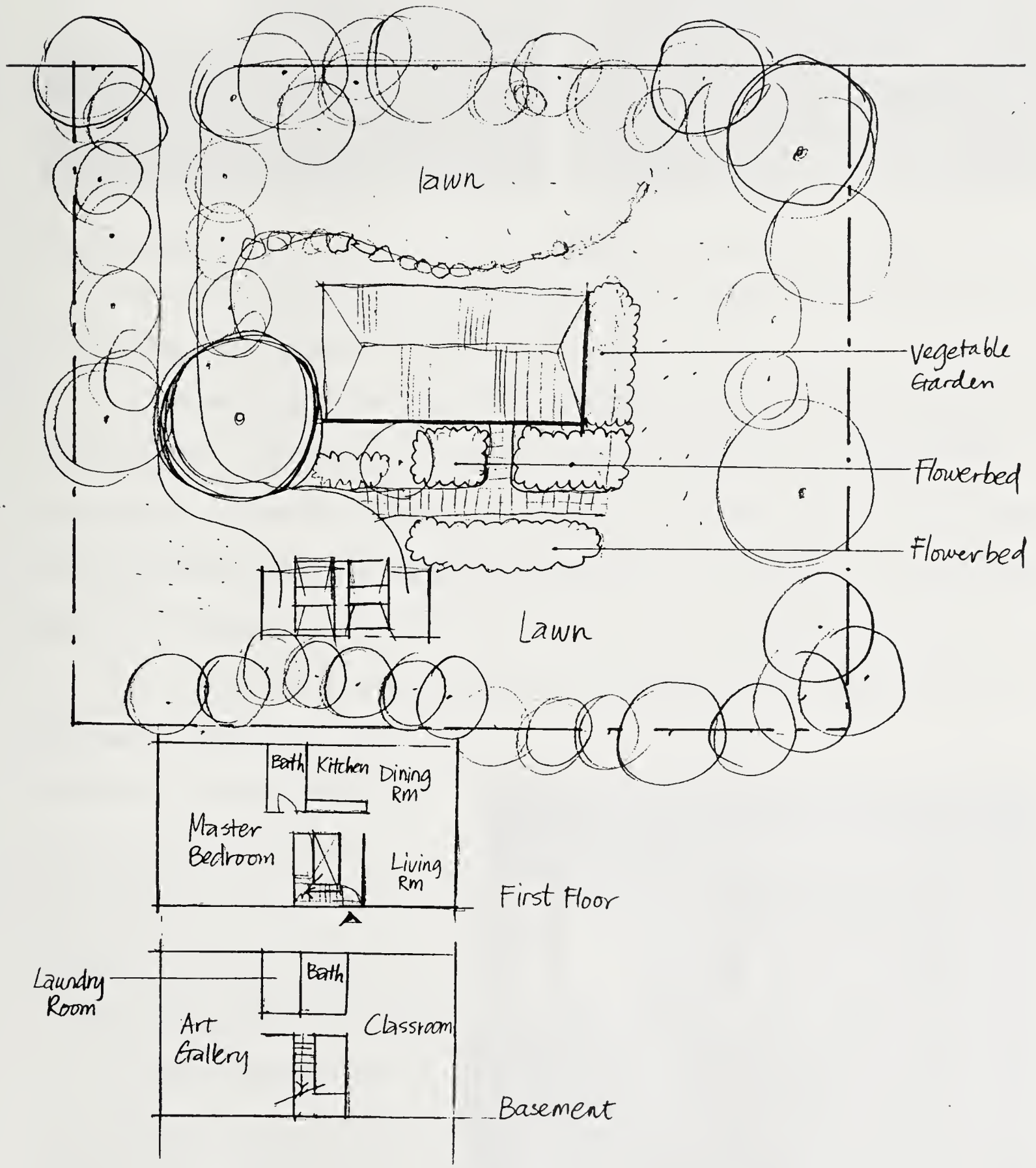


Figure 33. House and garden plan

2. Chinese Decorative Arts, 1999

Figure 34. Living Room

Figure 35. The daughter's playing flute

Ms. Ling has been in the United States for nine years. Her husband and daughter joined her five years ago. They bought this forty year old house a half year ago.

When they moved in, they replaced the carpeting with hardwood flooring in the living room and dining room. In the living room, a fine bamboo scroll is painted with a traditional Chinese longevity theme and symbols, such as an old gentleman, pine trees and oriental cranes. A piano covered with traditional Chinese tapestry is for their twelve year old daughter, who also plays the flute and other instruments (Figure 34 & 35). She takes music lessons in school.

A wooden dining room set works very well in the room as it reflects in the shining floor (Figure 36). A shelf built into the dining room wall displays traditional Chinese crafts--clay made tiny Chinese figures, and famous Chinese wine in distinctively Chinese flavor decorative bottles. The kitchen door is decorated with long green stems of ivy. A Chinese cooking column from a Chinese newspaper showing various recipes is taped on the

Figure 36. Dining Room

Figure 37. Daughter's stuff animal collection

kitchen wall for easy reference.

The daughter's art works, from a Chinese painting class, are displayed in her bedroom, ranging from flowers to mountains. She speaks English very well, but her Chinese is not fluent in comparison. The bright color tiger pillows and a collection of stuff animals ranging from monkey to bear, reflecting her childish imagination and personal tastes (Figure 37). By the window she hangs a handmade paper craft, which incorporates Chinese character of "spring" into the design.

In the master bedroom, a very special scroll hangs, written with a hundred calligraphy styles of the Chinese word "longevity" (Figure 38). According to Chinese tradition, this is a great gesture of seeking good fortune and a happy long-life for the family to enjoy.

Figure 38. Calligraphy scroll

The basement has a fireplace and a Ping-Pong table, which they play very often. The spacious screened porch will be a great retreat during the summer. The brick patio serves as a transitional space between the house and the backyard lawn.

Figure 39. Tulips border the house

The family just started engaging in gardening practices after they moved in. They planted tulips, petunia, impatiens, dianthus, lilies, and daffodils to decorate the house facade (Figure 39). They think it will be fun to add a vegetable garden next year (Figure 40).

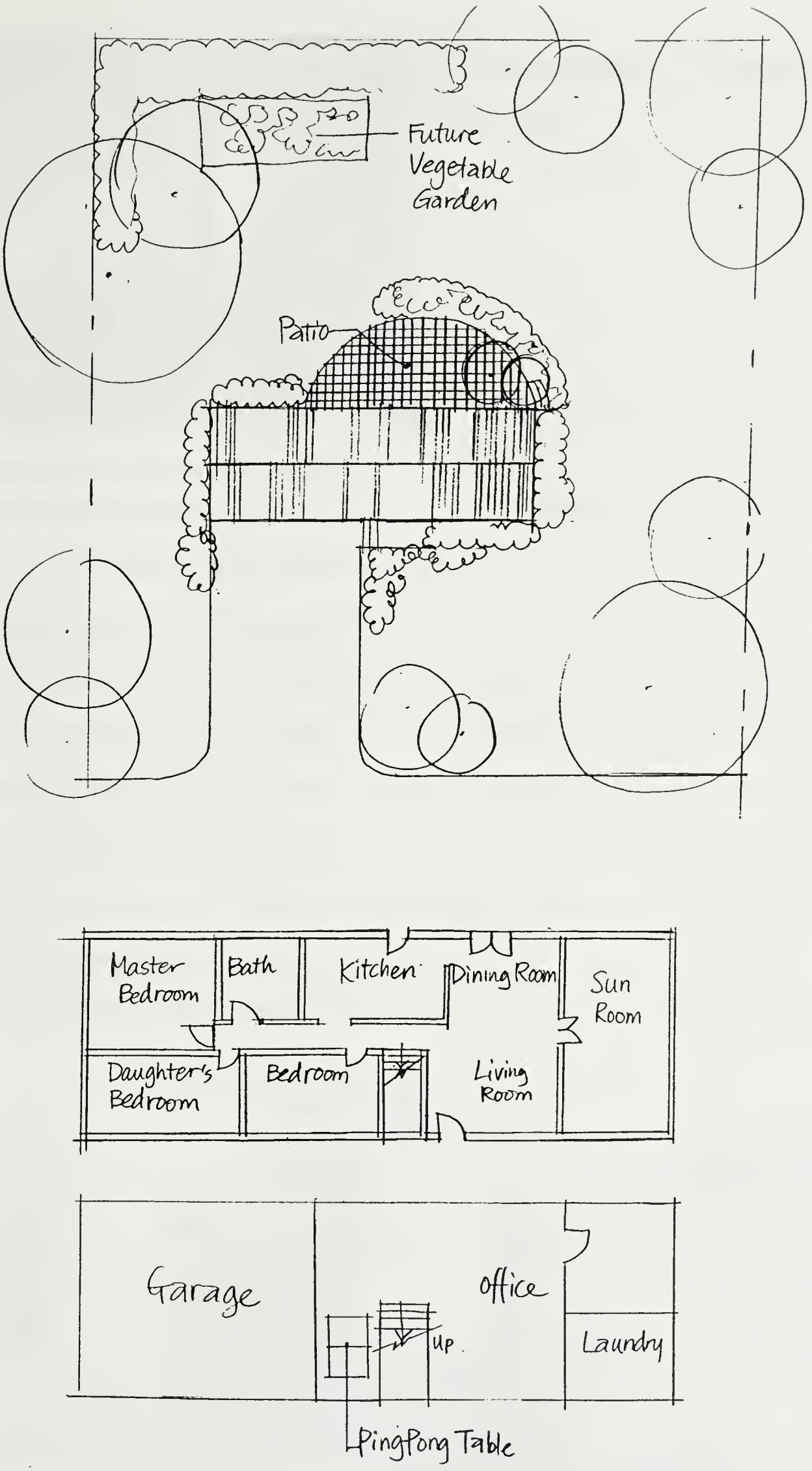


Figure 40. House and garden plan

Figure 41. Chinese paintings as a decorative theme

3. The Poetic Spirit of Chinese Paintings, 1999

The forty-year old house has very similar spatial organization as Ms. Ling's home. However, the interior decoration reveals a totally different and surprisingly great unified theme--Chinese paintings as a powerful decorative motif (Figure 41).

Nearby the front entrance, there is a very special Chinese calendar decorated with twelve zodiac animal coins, combining practical with artistic elegance.

The living room has several large size Chinese paintings done by Mr. Zhou's brother who lives in China. Some are flowers; some are mountains and streams. Smaller size paintings of bamboo, one of the most painted plants signifying strong Chinese spirit, flank the entry from dining room to the kitchen (Figure 42 & 43). The window tapestry, in warm red tone, reveals a welcoming message. It contrasts the usually cool tone of Chinese ink paintings very well. Silk flowers and colorful peacock feathers are in the vases above the fireplace. The hardwood floor is decorated with a beautifully decorated area rug under dining table.

Their son's bedroom displays a Greenbay Packer's poster and Packer wallpaper borders

Figure 42 & 43. Chinese paintings displayed in the living and dining room

the wall (Figure 44). There are also many CDs and a computer.

A wood screen porch is still under construction, and they have a long term plan to expand the existing kitchen. The basement has another computer and some decorations of dragons and boats. Chinese peony and rock paintings add a warm touch to the room. A blanket covers the sofa.

Figure 44. Green Bay Packer's wall paper

Under gardener friend's influence, they started experimenting with flowering plants in their back yard such as tulip, petunia, geranium, lilies, crocus, and chrysanthemums. The family is also actively engaged in birdwatching. They planted a patch of sunflowers and black-eyed-susan for birds (Figure 45). They really enjoy all kinds of birds' daily visits to their "bird garden" (Figure 46).

Figure 45. Gardening for birds

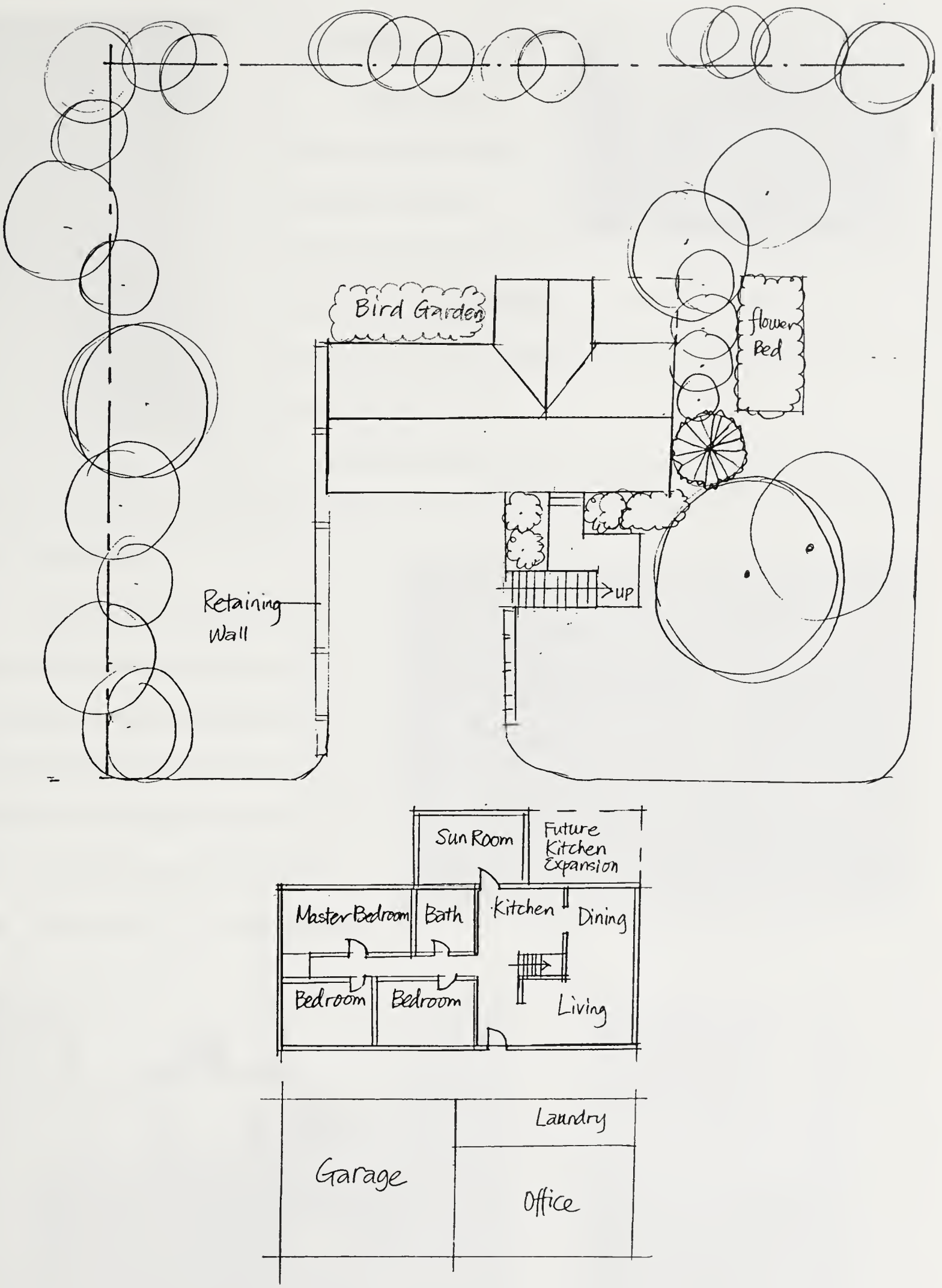


Figure 46. House and garden plan

Figure 47. View from street

4. Model Elegance, 1996

This is a young professional family in their mid-thirties. Renee's husband works in a private firm. She stays home taking care of their four year old daughter and two year old son. Their house has three bedrooms and two bathrooms (Figure 47).

Figure 48. Plants border the walkway

In Taiwan they lived in a high-rise apartment building and a single detached house. Compared to Taiwan, where they are from, they like the privacy American society in general offers.

The colorful flowering borders flank the entry to the house (Figure 48 & 49). An animal sculpture is sitting by the front door guarding the house from evil. The first floor is mainly a living room and a kitchen. The living room has a cathedral ceiling. There are silk flower arrangements,

Figure 49. Front garden

Figure 50. Silk flower arrangements in the living room

Figure 51. Living room

and black shelf full of Chinese and English books and CDs (Figure 50 & 51). The husband said he brought a complete set of Chinese kung-fu writer's novels with them when they came to the United States. Decoration and furniture in the spacious living room are elegant and contemporary.

The second floor has three bedrooms and one bathroom. There are lots of Chinese paintings and kid's Chinese books.

Figure 52. Garden fence and plants

The husband spend several weekends working with a next door neighbor together to build a very nice wooden fence around the backyard (Figure 52).

Figure 53. Patio-outdoor living

The backyard is very open for kids to play. Their patio is the family's outdoor dining room in the summer (Figure 53). Renee hung a sun shape clay plate on the fence as a focal point, and planted a flowering border around the edge of the garden (Figure 54 & 55). She enjoys spending time in the garden to plant flowers (Figure 56). It's like meditation for her.

Figure 54. Decorative plate

Figure 55. Garden design

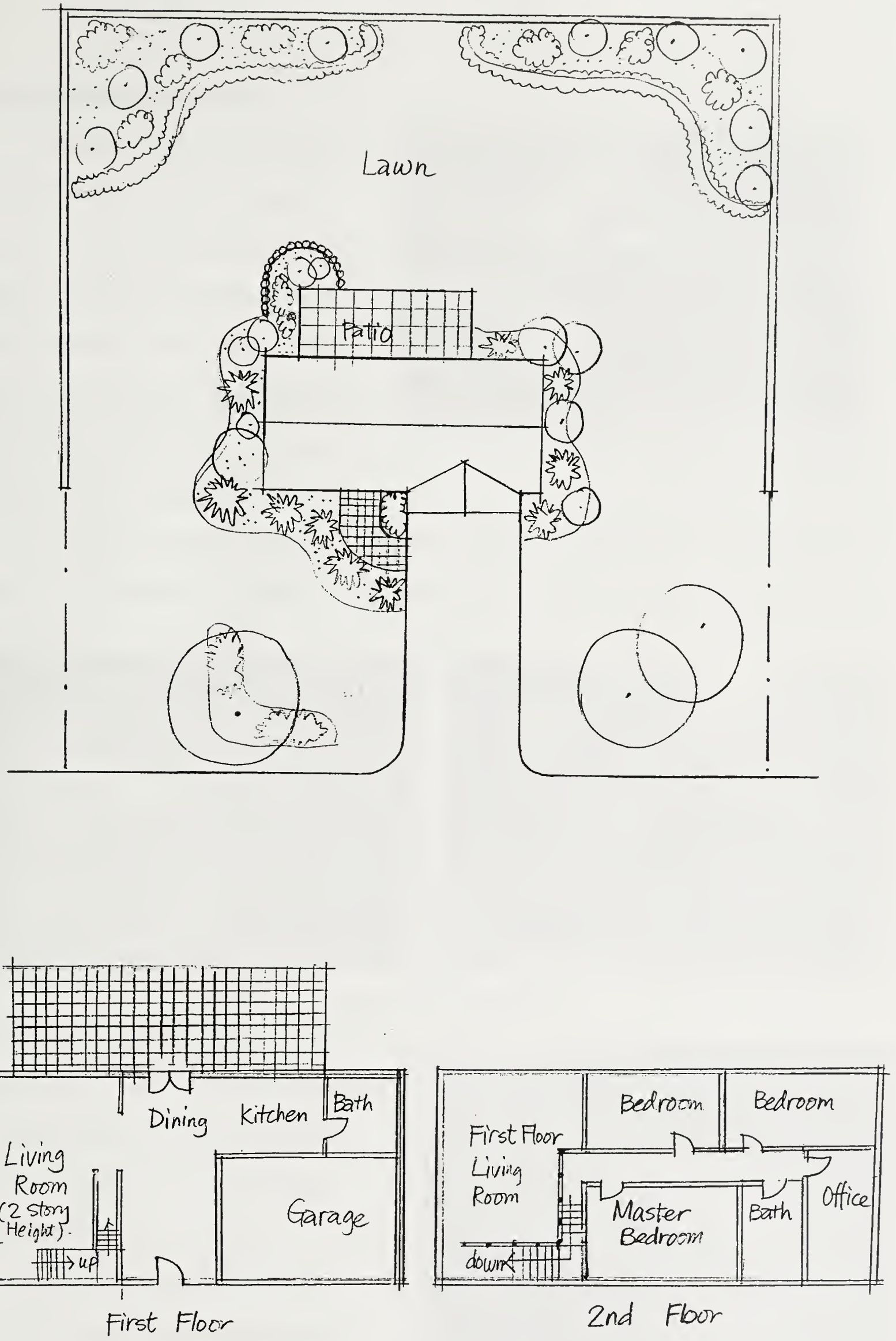


Figure 56. House and garden plan

5. Special Home Garden, 1996

Wang family is from Taiwan, who runs their family restaurant on campus. The seven-year-old house has two stories (Figure 57). First floor consists of living room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom and a deck. Second floor has three bedrooms and a bathroom. The interior is decorated by many potted flowering and foliage plants.

Figure 57. Home front view

Ms. Wang loves planting, and is the major care provider for their garden, which consists of three areas: herb garden, rock garden and vegetable garden. The herb garden consists of sweet

Figure 58 & 59. Herb garden

basil, chive, dill, lemon balm, mint, mustard, parsley, rosemary, sage, tarragon, thyme, garlic, ornamental onion, and some Chinese herbs (Figure 58 & 59). The rock garden has a variety of plants such as rock cress, columbine, dwarf iris, sedum, cotoneaster, moss pink, daylily, black-eyed susan, etc (Figure 60 & 61). Their vegetable garden includes Chinese

Figure 60. Rock garden

cabbages, beans, kales, cucumbers, peppers, tomatoes, lettuce, peas, spinach, chives, squash, etc (Figure 62 & 63). They give friends the vegetables they harvest every year to share their sheer pleasure of gardening. Ms. Wang kept her potted plants down in the basement while in winter.

Figure 61. Climbers and rock garden

Figure 62. Vegetable garden and flowering plants under deck

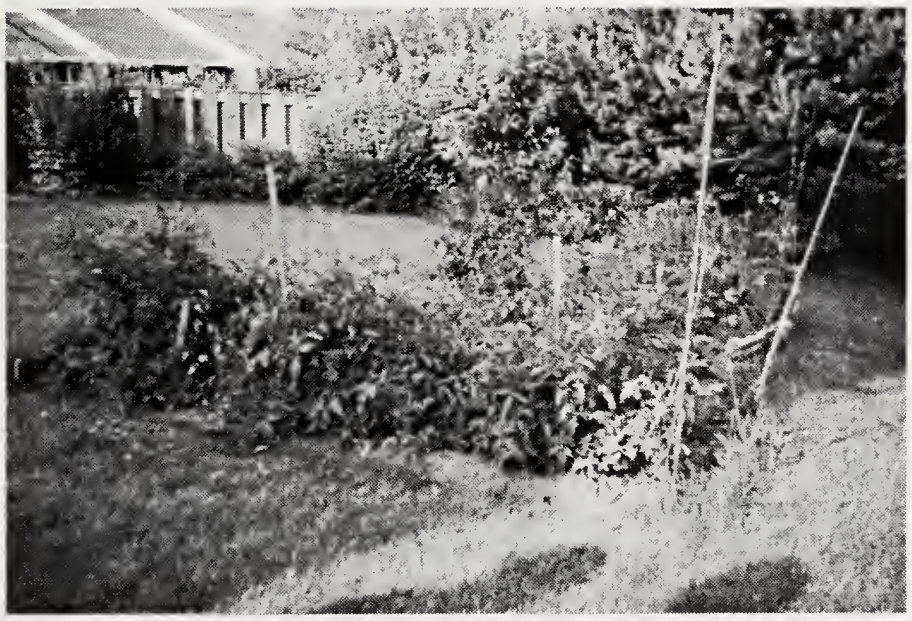
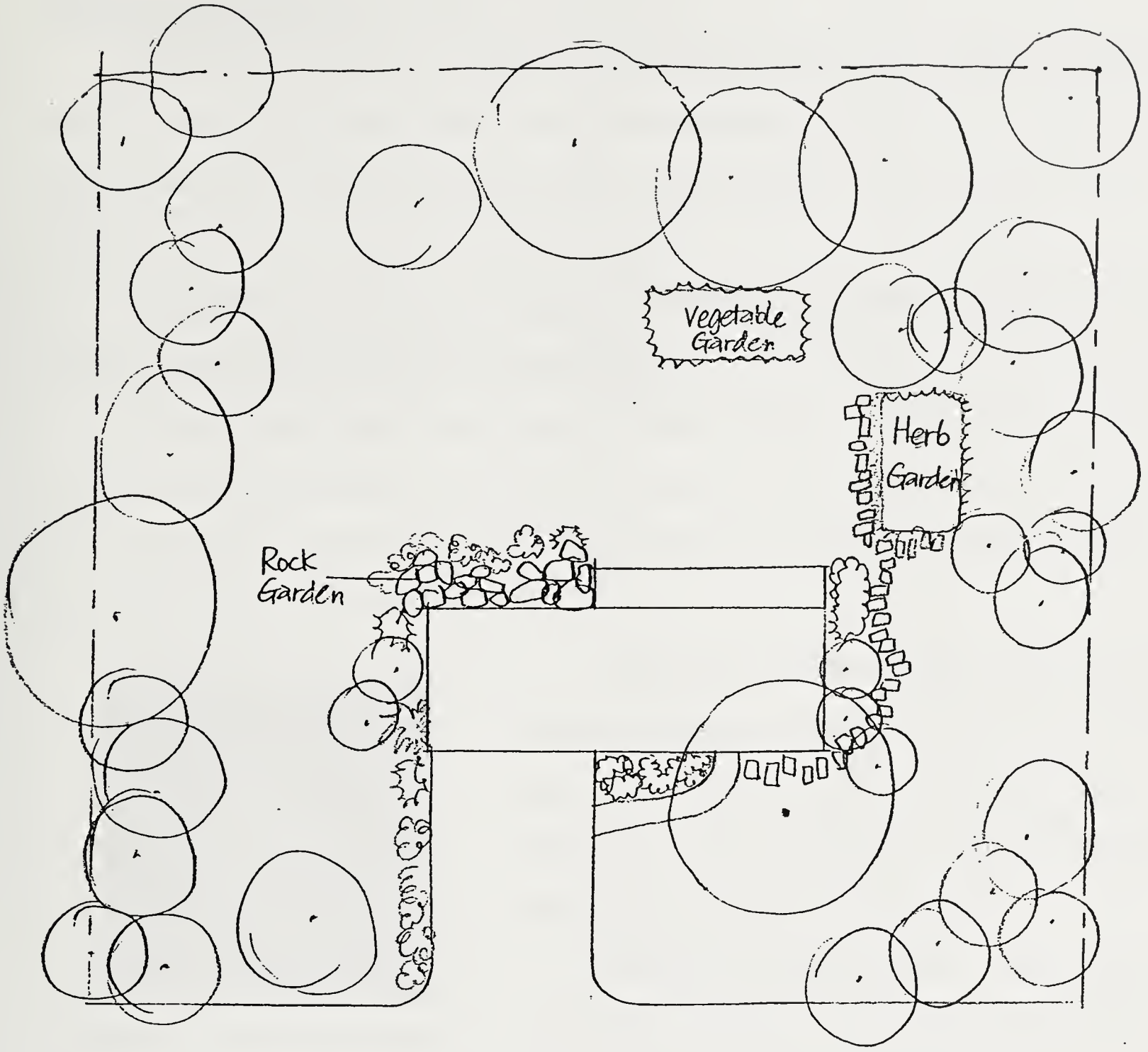


Figure 63. Vegetable garden



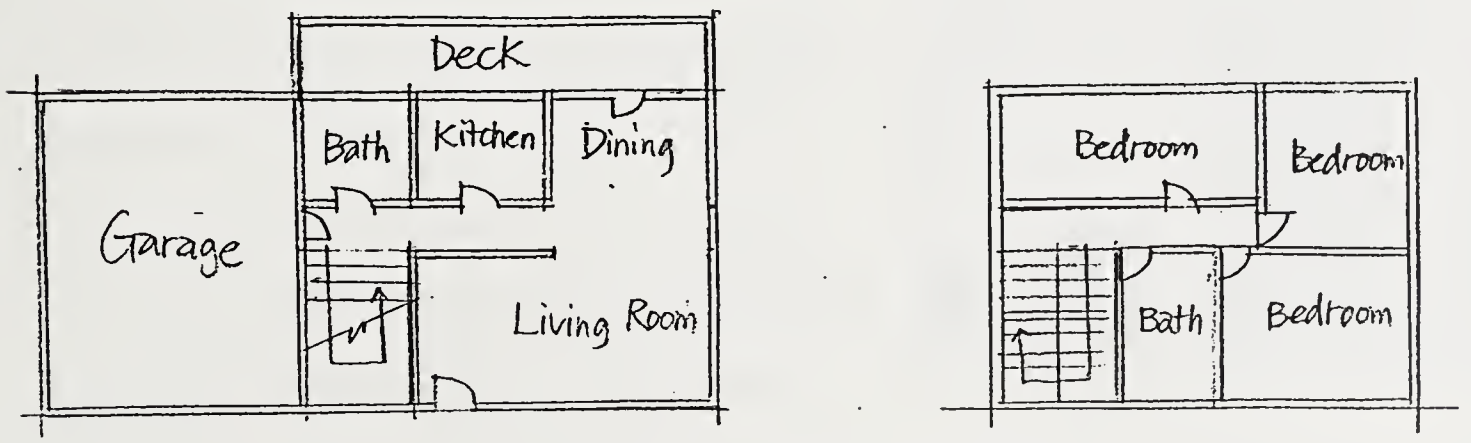


Figure 64. House and garden plan

6. Chinese Decorative Arts, 1999

Mr. Wu is a researcher in a private firm. Ms. Wu has a part time job. Their elder daughter twenty-six years old is a college student. Their younger daughter just graduated from college and works full time as a manager at a department store. The house has three bedrooms and one bath-room.

When they were in China, they lived in a medium density apartment building in Beijing. They lived in apartment before they moved into this house.

This is a twenty-year-old ranch house with light blue siding. A satellite dish is screened by a shrub close to the front of the house. There is a very spacious fenced back yard with several shade trees and a tool shed. All the family members help with the vegetable garden and flower garden, but Ms. Wu is the major care provider.

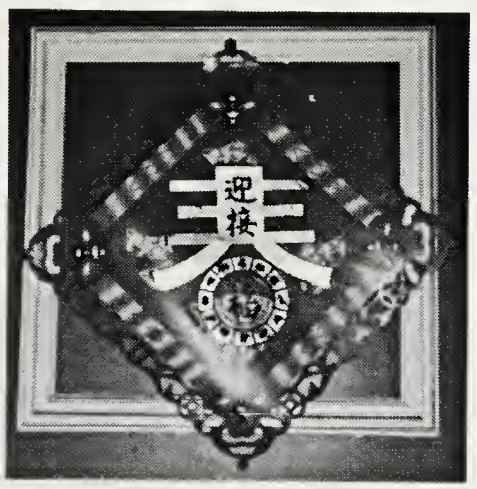


Figure 65. Chinese character of "spring"

A big map of China hangs on the wall in the hallway when you walk in the main entrance. On the opposing wall hangs a large mirror. The main front door has a Chinese character of "spring" as decoration and shows their willing-ness for seeking good fortune (Figure 65).

Ms. Wu loves plants very much. There are many potted plants in the house, especially in the living room and family room. The smaller family room is her favorite because it warms in winter and cools in sum-mer due to windows on both ends of the room. There is ample sunshine year round. Chinese goddess statues are displayed above the fireplace (Figure 66). Sheets have covered this room's sofa. It is a common practice in China to put a cover sheet on furniture, especially sofa, to keep it from getting dirty too soon. It is very practical.

Figure 66. Chinese goddess statues

Figure 67. Large potted plants decorated living room

Figure 68. Bamboo anchors the room corner

The spacious living room is decorated with beautiful blue sofa sets and all kinds of large green leaf plants (Figure 67). A bamboo plant softens a corner of the living room (Figure 68). Silk flower arrangements in traditional Chinese vases add an elegant touch to the welcoming atmosphere. A computer dominates an important corner of the living room. Above it on the wall hangs a big fan with Chinese painting of horses from a famous contemporary Chinese painter (Figure 69). There are many DVD, VCD disks of Chinese songs and movies. The daughters enjoy karaoke singing very much. A Ping-Pong table for exercising (the family's most popular game), is located in their unfurnished basement.

Figure 69. Chinese fan with horse painting in the living room

Old photos of parents, taken in Beijing before they immigrated to the United States, dressed in traditional Chinese costumes of emperor and empress are displayed in master bedroom. The elder daughter's bedroom has another computer and large poster of Kim Anderson/ Verkerke--a beautiful girl with a long stem red rose in her hand. Younger daughter's bedroom has many

Chinese novels.

Their vegetable garden has tomatoes, green peas, cucumbers and some other popular Chinese vegetables (Figure 70). It is the family group activity to dig the backyard and plant vegetables and flowers together. They have a white dog called Sam whom is adored by everyone in the home.

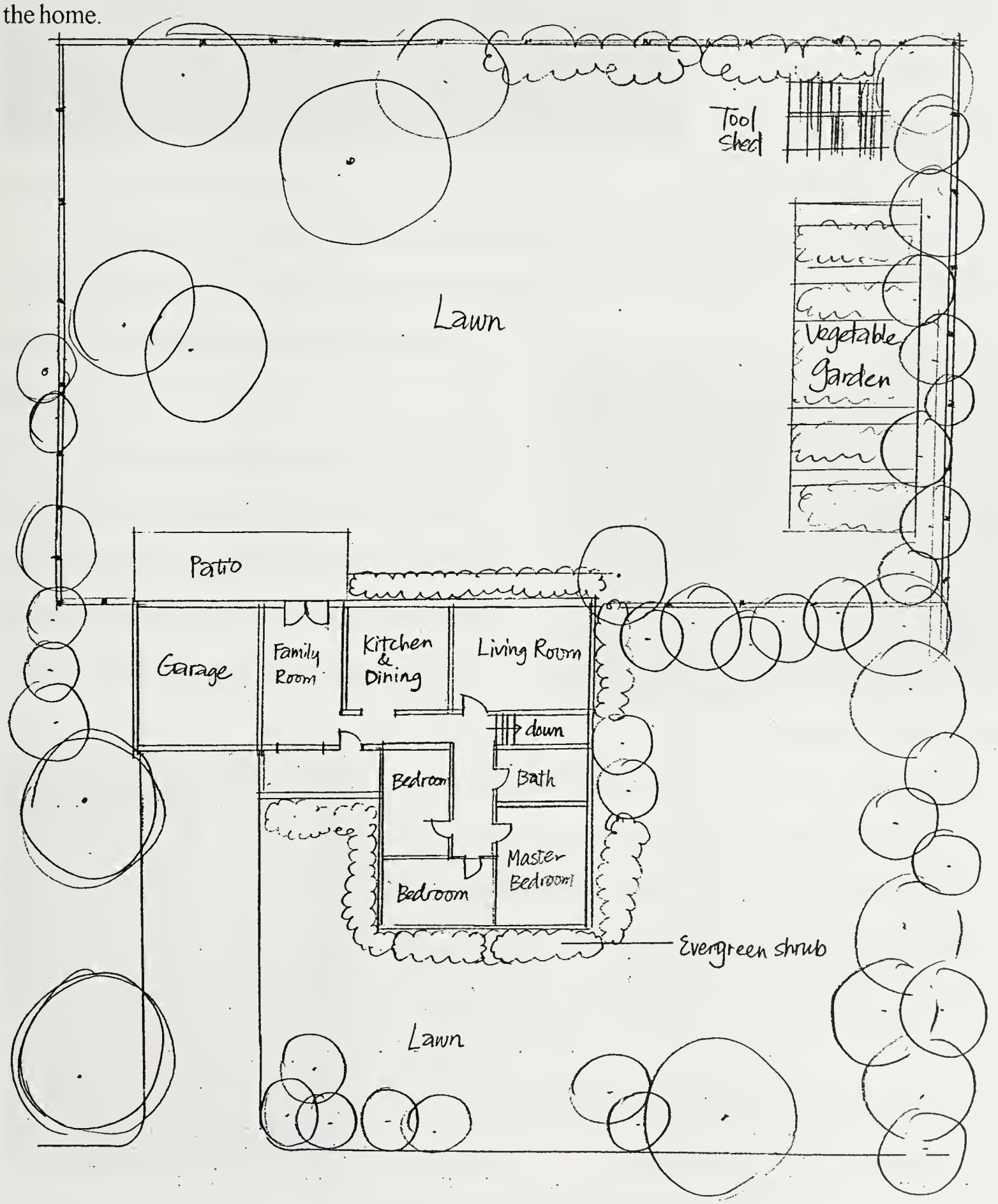


Figure 70. House and garden plan

7. Modern Vocabulary, 1995

Figure 71. House and front yard

Kathy's husband, Mr. Lin, is a researcher in a private firm, and Kathy holds a part-time job. Their nine year old son is in primary school. Their house has two bedrooms and one bathroom (Figure 71).

In China, they lived in a medium-density apartment building in a residential village in Nanjing. Before they bought this house in November, 1994, they lived in an apartment in Madison. They like the house very much and enjoy living here.

Figure 72. Play structure in the back yard

The back yard is mainly flat lawn, which is excellent for the son and father to play soccer. Children's play equipment is placed in a corner of the yard (Figure 72). The mother comments that their son plays a lot with neighbor's kids. A wooden deck is attached to the kitchen, which forms a transitional space between interior and exterior. A barbecue grill is placed on the deck. A Ping-Pong table is located in the center of basement. (Playing Ping-Pong is a very popular exercise in China.) Father and son enjoy playing Ping-Pong at home.

Figure 73. Chinese painting

Although the house is located at the corner of the street, they like the privacy offered by their elevated living room, which is above the street level.

Many Chinese paintings and scrolls are hung on the wall in the living room, bathroom, study room and hallway (Figure 73). A colorful oriental handicraft collection is displayed on the top of the cabinets in the kitchen. A very special metal painting is hung on the wall of the study room. A big stuffed panda is in the son's bedroom (instead of Teddy bear) for show and tell at school (Figure 74).

Figure 74. A stuffed panda by the son's bed

The interior decoration of the living room is attractive and westernized with a beautiful carpet on the floor and abstract paintings embrace the wall (Figure 75).

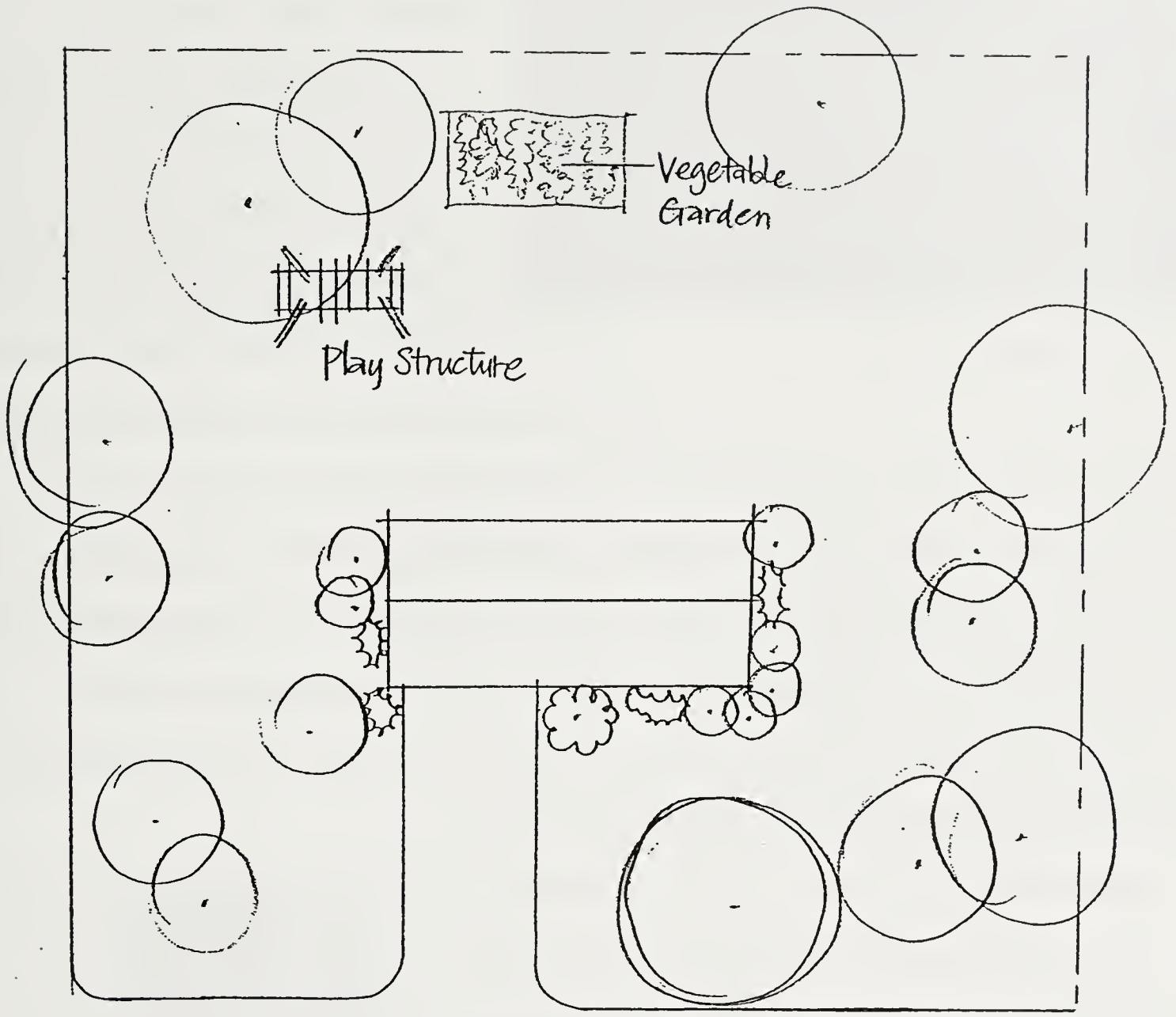
Figure 75. Living room

Kathy actively participates in an American Choir group in the city. She has traveled with the group to many European countries in recent years.

Kathy has gardening practice as her hobby for several years. She plants her favorite spring flowers such as tulips and daffodils to embrace the front entrance to the house. In the back yard, she plants a row of lilacs as a border. They add several fruit trees such as peach, apricot and cherry over the years (Figure 76). They really enjoy the grapes they planted under the deck (Figure 77). In fact, it is very common to include grape vines in contemporary Chinese residential gardens. They also add a vegetable garden to the back yard with tomato, pea, pepper, cucumber and green onion (Figure 78).

Figure 76. Blooming lilacs and fruit trees

Figure 77. Grape vines embrace the deck



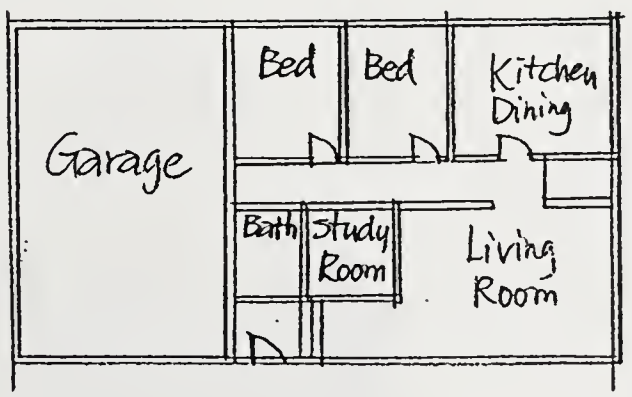


Figure 78. House and garden plan

8. Chinese Vernacular Symbols, 1997

The Zhen family was from rural Guangdong Province in China. They were peasants before they immigrated to the United States in 1989. Sixteen members from three related families came to Wisconsin together. They started Chinese restaurant business. Zhen family runs a popular Chinese restaurant in a food court of a local mall.

Figure 79. House and front yard

They bought their house in 1995. The six-year-old house has two stories (Figure 79). First floor has a living room, bathroom, kitchen, dining room and a deck. Second floor consists of three bedrooms and a bathroom. Basement has a bedroom, living room and a bathroom.

The family, especially Mr. and Ms. Zhen, mainly eats Chinese food. Mr. and Ms. Zhen do not speak English well. Mr. Zhen is a chef in their restaurant. The eldest daughter, 28 year old, has two daughters, age four and one respectively. The son-in-law's from Hong Kong and the couple also lives in the house. The second daughter works in a bank, and the youngest daughter works as a financial consultant in Chicago. They all help with their restaurant business in their spare time. Ms. Zhen and two younger daughters also help take care of the two granddaughters.

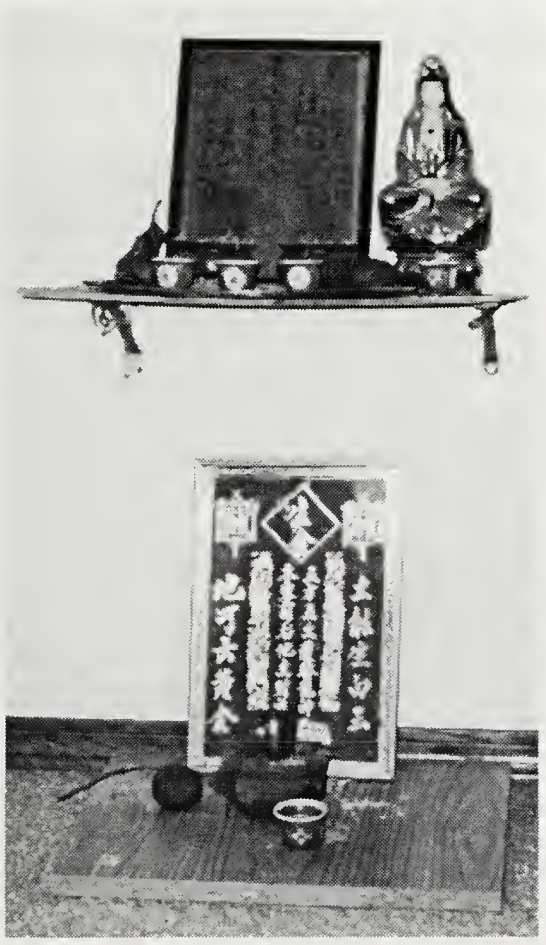


Figure 80. Family altar and Buddhism shrine

There are many Chinese vernacular posters and symbols are hung on the wall in the house. The most distinctive features of the living room are a family altar and Buddhism shrine (Figure 80).

Figure 81. Chinese goddess statue

Figure 82. Sacred place above the fireplace

Above the fireplace, grandparents' portraits are displayed with statues of a Chinese goddess, a cock, a peach tree, and a silk flower arrangement (Figure 81 & 82). To the left of the fireplace, on a wall shelf, displays an ancestor shrine with a Chinese goddess statue and incense burner. Underneath the family shrine, is a sacred place for the god of earth. They continue their ritual of worshiping god of earth by burning incense and serving good Chinese wine to the god. Ms. Zhen said she brought them with her to the United States. They worship ancestors and Chinese gods regularly.

Chinese from Guangdong Province like barbecue very much. It is part of their regular diet.

Figure 83. Summer barbecue on the deck

The Zhen family bought an electrical barbecue grill and enjoy days out on the deck barbecuing with families and friends (Figure 83).

Figure 84. Flower bed at the main entrance

The front flower bed embraces the curving entrance to the front porch leading to the main entrance (Figure 84). Backyard is mainly lawn and has a

children's play equipment and a vegetable garden (Figure 85). They have become more and more engaged in active gardening practice because they found that the stress-relief gardening activities help them to rejuvenate from the exhausting restaurant work.

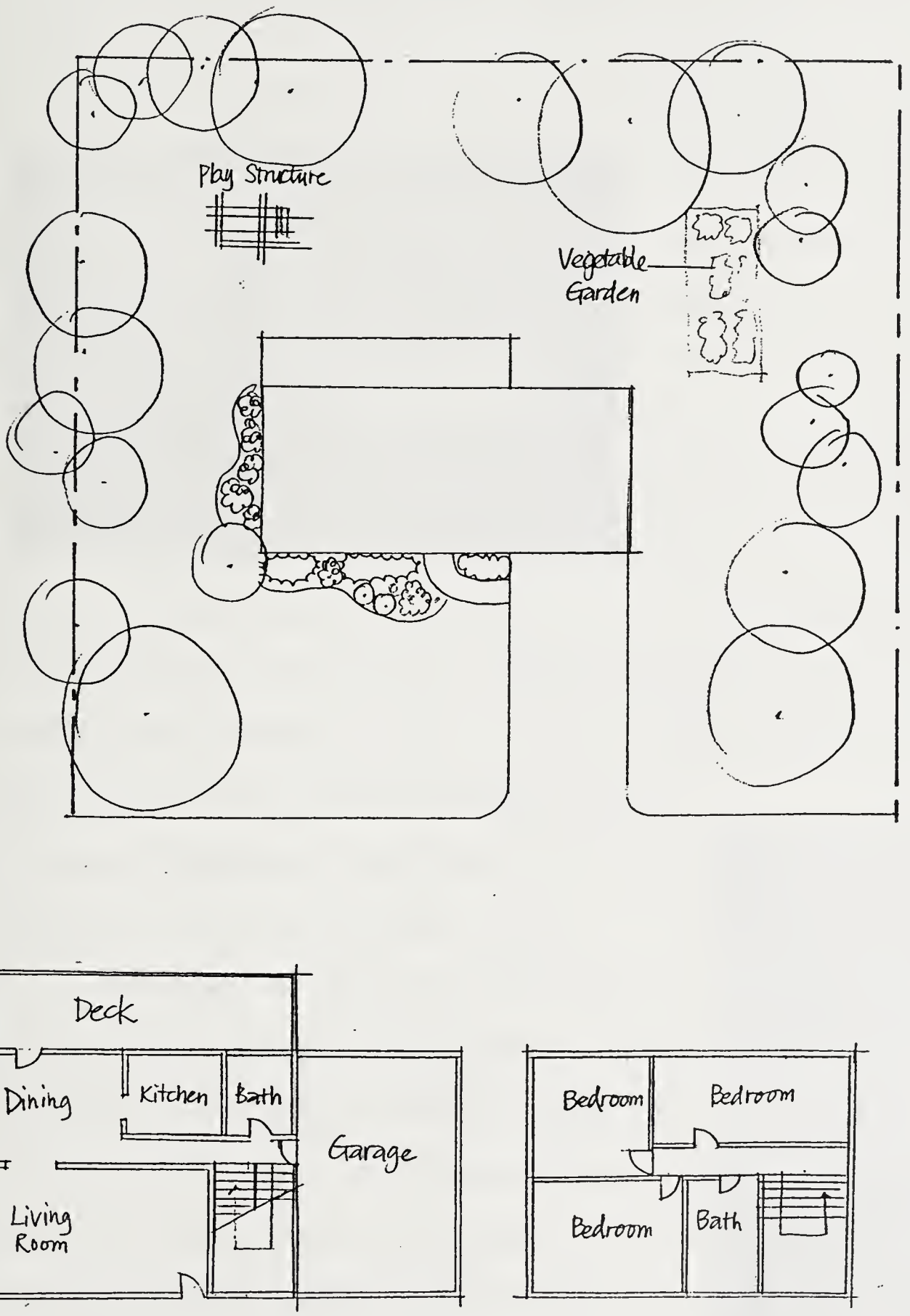


Figure 85. House and garden plan

9. Home of Feng Shui, 1995

Mr. Lee is a chef in a Chinese restaurant. Ms. Lee has a part-time cleaning job. Their twenty-four year old daughter is a saleswoman for Mary Kay, and twenty-one year old son and eighteen year old son are college students. Their home consists of four bedrooms and two bathrooms.

Figure 86. Large potted plants in the dining room

Three generations of the family used to live together under the same roof in a rural area of Guangdong Province, China. "The house in China was three times bigger than the current one." They farmed the land before the whole family immigrated to America in 1983. They bought the house in 1990.

Mr. Lee believes in feng shui—Chinese geomancy. He said "Feng shui is modern environmental science." "The earth changes its rotating magnetic direction every year. For example, last year was west and east. However, this year is north and south. According to feng shui principle, we should arrange furniture in that direction. We change our furniture arrangement accordingly every year."

In the living room, there is a 50-gallon fish tank with many beautiful fish and a birdcage with several birds. Ms. Lee said "They are our sons' hobby." Many potted plants decorate the living room and dining room (Figure 86). The wife enjoys taking care of the plants. There are a variety of Chinese decorations in the house (Figure 87 & 88). For instance, a small decoration craft is hung on the front door, which is believed to expel the evil and

Figure 87. Chinese decoration in living room

Figure 88. Chinese Buddha statue in the living room

Figure 89. Silk lotus and flower arrangements

bring happiness to the family. Silk flower arrangement of lotus symbolizes their Chinese cultural heritage and religion has been integrated into their current life style (Figure 89). In the dining room, a big golden paper fan is hung on the wall, similar to those displayed in Chinese restaurants.

A Buddhism shrine, which serves as a sacred place of worship for Buddha and ancestors, is located in a corner of the master bedroom (Figure 90).

Figure 90. Buddhism shrine in the master bedroom

The backyard is the location of their vegetable garden (Figure 91). The wife plants lots of common Chinese vegetables such as tomatoes, potato, carrots, green peas, and peppers every year. They enjoy eating their home produced organic vegetables.

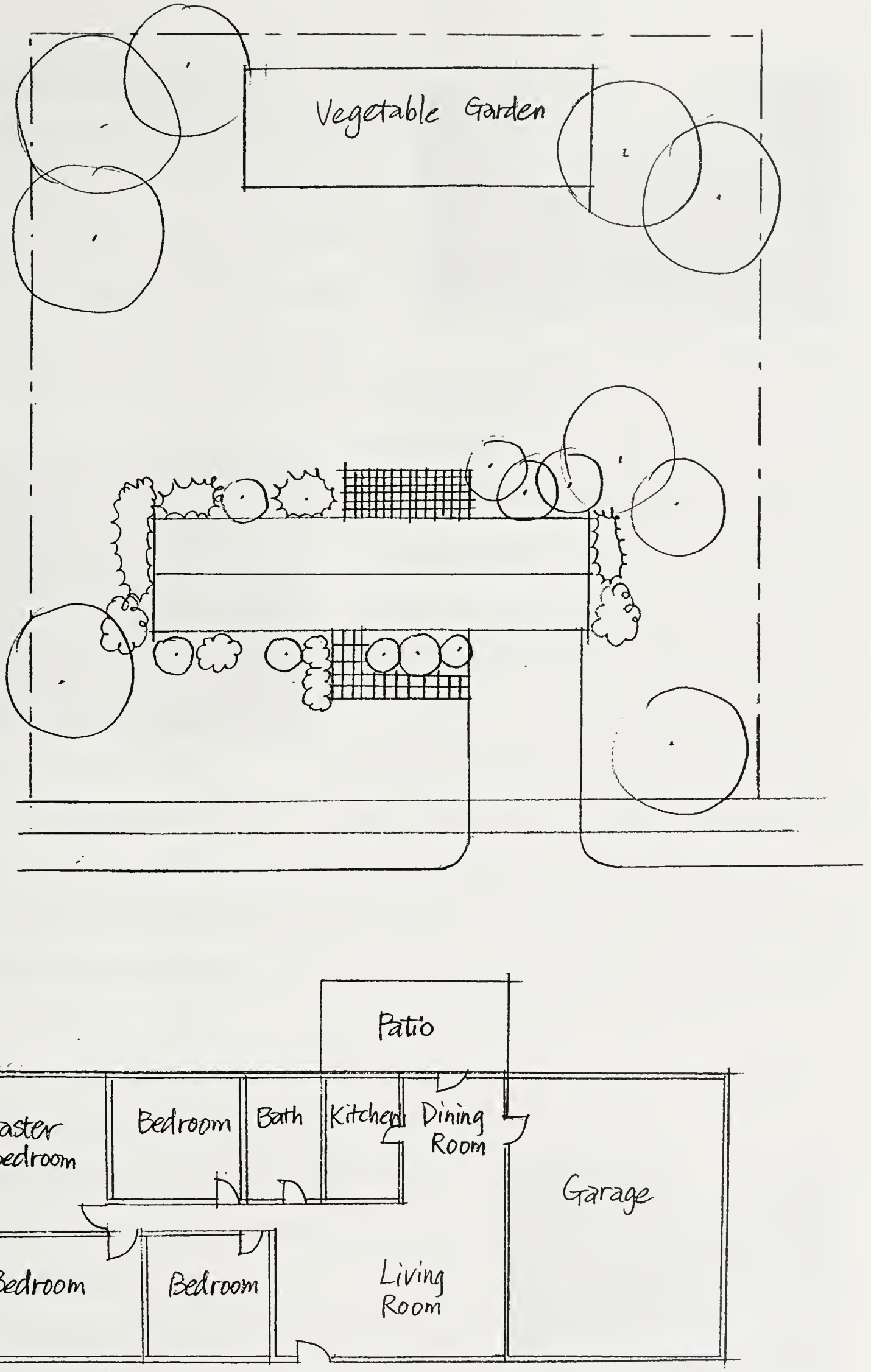


Figure 91. House and garden plan

10. Minimum Decoration, 1997

Figure 92. House and open front lawn

Sijia and her husband were graduate school classmates. She's from Taiwan and her husband is American. They are both scientists studying meteorology and work in the same lab at the University. They have a four year old son and a one year old baby girl. Since the birth of the daughter, Sijia only works three days a week to spend more time with their children. Sijia's parents live down the basement when they come to visit from Canada. They visit for several months every year, and enjoy taking care of the grandchildren during the visit. Sijia's son understands both English and Chinese.

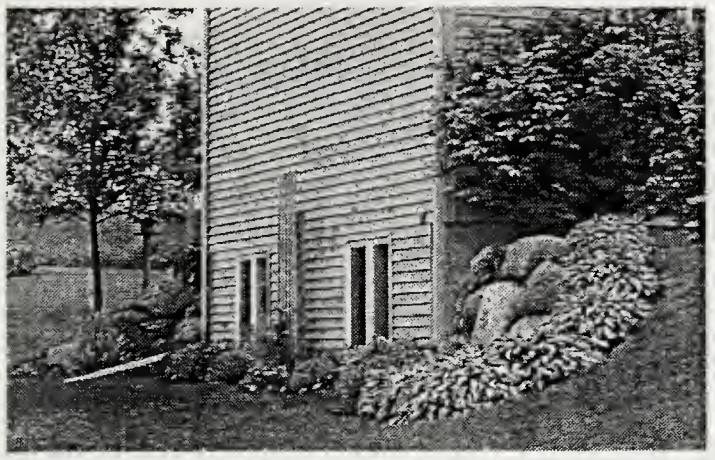
Figure 93. Sculpture and Chinese crafts

Hanging from their front porch is a green fabric frog decoration, weaving in the wind (Figure 92). There's minimal decoration in the house. A piano is placed in the living room. Playing piano is Sijia's hobby. Nearby the fireplace, they display a wooden sculpture of a female figure and many Chinese crafts (Figure 93). The first floor includes living room, dining room, family room, bathroom, and kitchen outlooking into the backyard. The second floor includes three bedrooms and bathroom.

Kid's play equipment is in the fenced backyard, which remains very open and serves as children's playground (Figure 94). They have started gardening practice recently by adding various roses to border the house (Figure 95). Their vegetable garden includes chives, snow peas, red peppers and tomatoes.

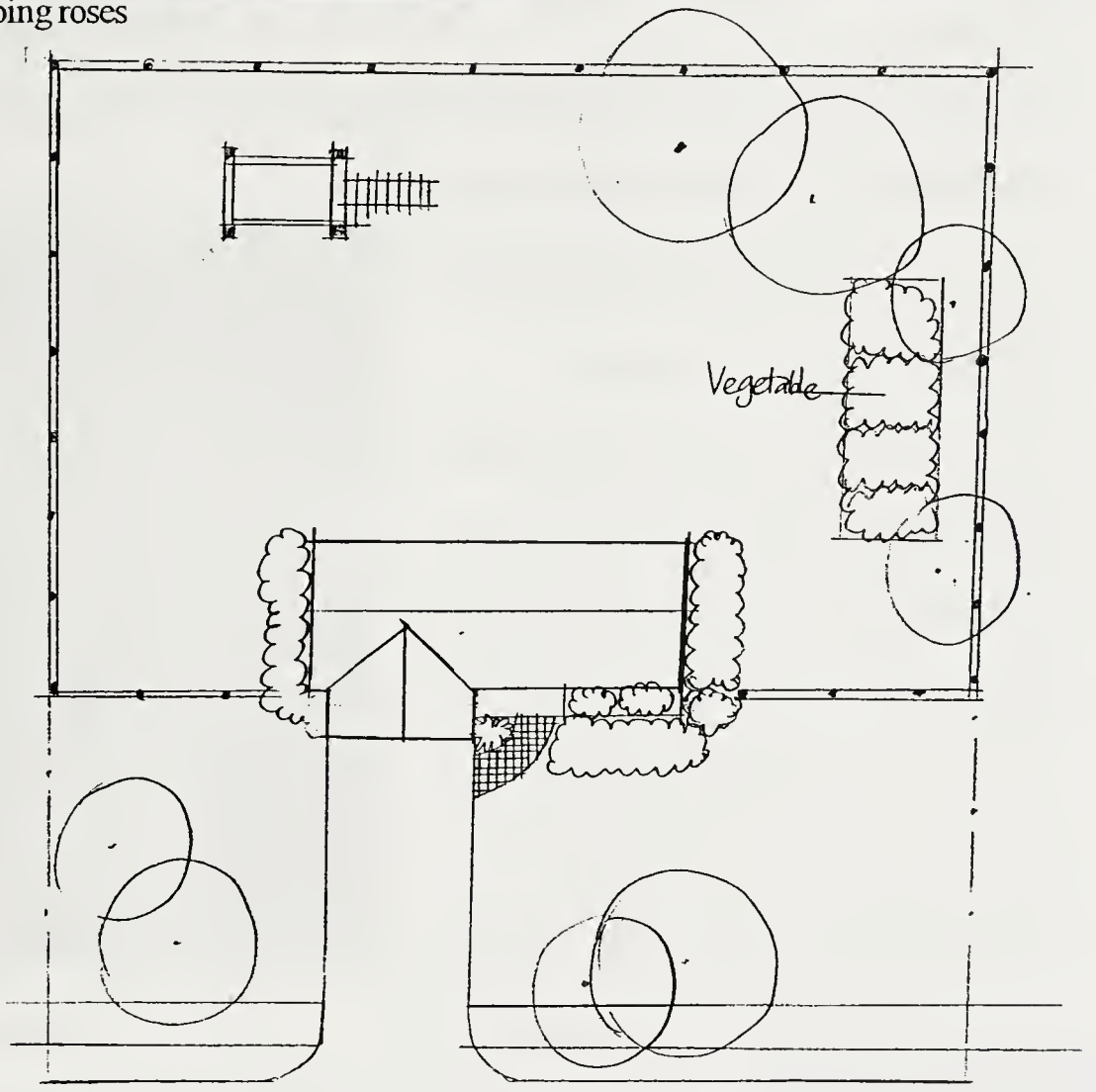
Figure 94. Fenced back yard as children's playground

The family enjoys taking a long walk around the neighborhood together after dinner, with the younger daughter in the baby stroller. Chinese has an old saying that "walk a hundred



paces after dinner, you'll live to be ninety-nine years old." They are concerned about potential safety hazards that the busy residential street may pose for their son. They might consider buying another house in a few years.

Figure 95. Climbing roses



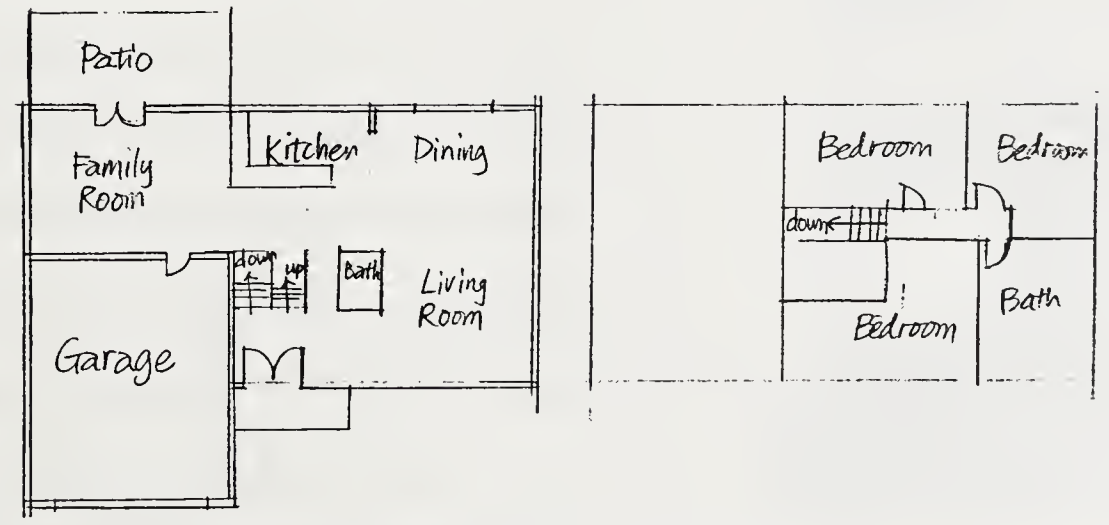


Figure 96. House and garden plan

11. Simplicity, 1995

Figure 97. House and front yard

Ann is a research specialist at University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her twenty-five years old daughter is a college student studying computer science. Her eighteen-years old son is a high school student. Their house is located on a corner lot and consists of three bedrooms and one and one half bathrooms (Figure 97).

Figure 98. Living room

Ann came to America ten years ago and the daughter and son joined her in 1991. In China, they lived in a medium-density apartment building in Beijing, the capital of China. Before they bought the house, they lived in a co-op and apartments in Madison. Ann and her husband divorced in 1993.

The most distinctive feature of the interior decoration is simplicity. Several plants such as Boston fern are hung from the ceiling in the corner of the living room, or placed on the tabletop in the kitchen (Figure 98). A bright colored Chinese kite is hung at the entrance to the staircase. The kitchen is easy to use and big enough to work around. A peninsula counter serves as a spatial divide between the kitchen and dining room (Figure 99). Since they do not cook Chinese food regularly, the standard kitchen fits their needs well. The full bathroom has big mirrors and bright lighting and offers luxurious feelings. The most surprising

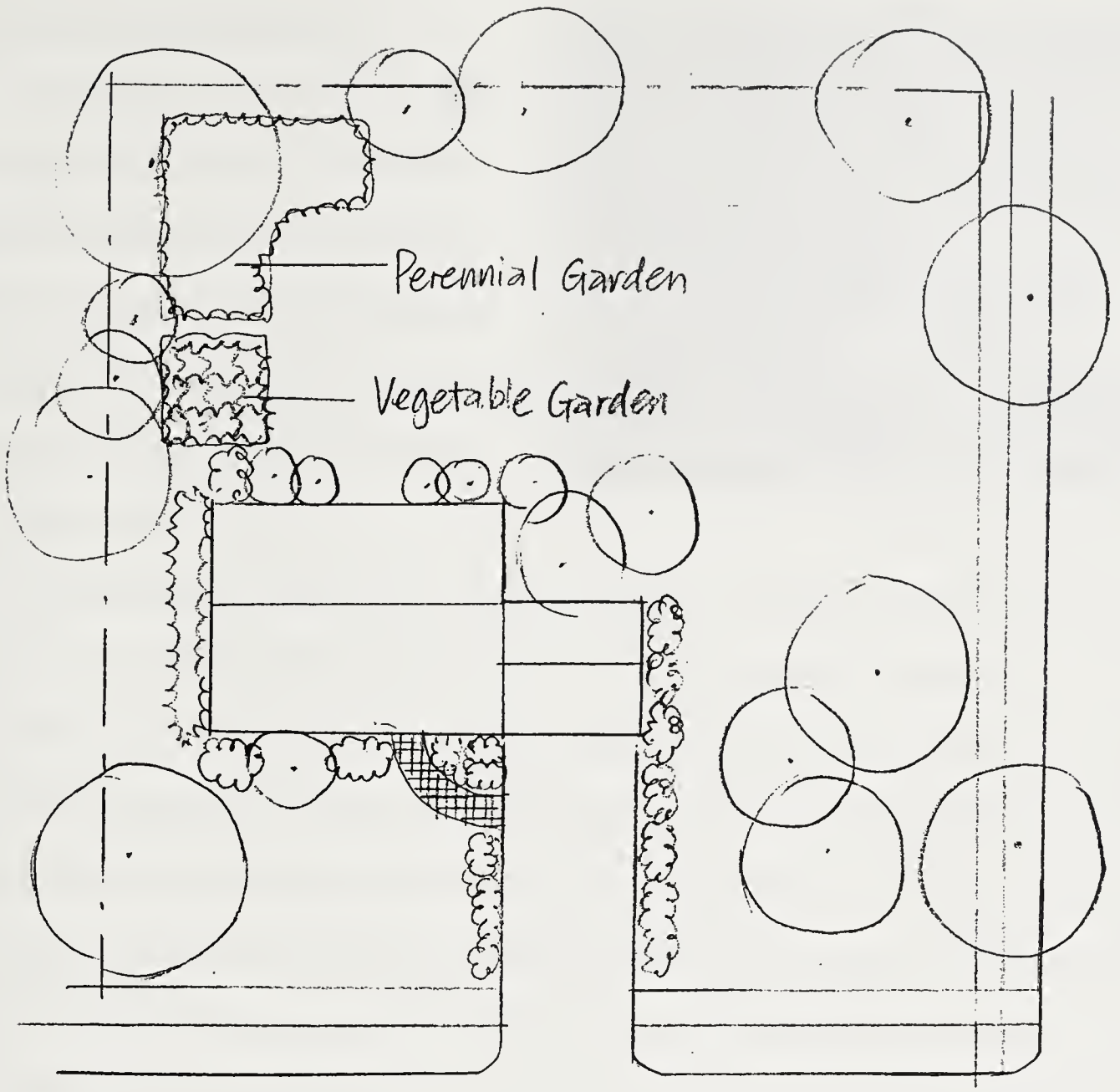
Figure 99. Kitchen

Figure 100. Stuff animal collection in the master bedroom

feature to me is that in mother's bedroom, there is a collection of stuffed bears, some bigger, some smaller, and even tiny (Figure 100). She is a little bit embarrassed to admit, "I like stuffed animals very much." The son practices Kung fu regularly, and won a youth competition. In the basement, a big map of swords is hung on the wall. The daughter's bedroom displays posters of boys and girls from Kim Anderson, photos with her boyfriend, and several huge stuffed dogs lie on her bed. According to Chinese zodiac, she was born in the dog year. Those dogs are the special birthday gifts from her boyfriend.

Ann started a vegetable garden in the back yard which includes Chinese cabbage (bok choy), spinach, pepper, lettuces, pea, squash, and tomato. She also designed a perennial garden with iris, hosta, oriental poppy, peony, phlox, purple coneflower, salvia, daisy, and dianthus. This garden provides fresh cutting flower to decorate the house as well (Figure 101 & 102).

Figure 101. Perennial garden and vegetable garden



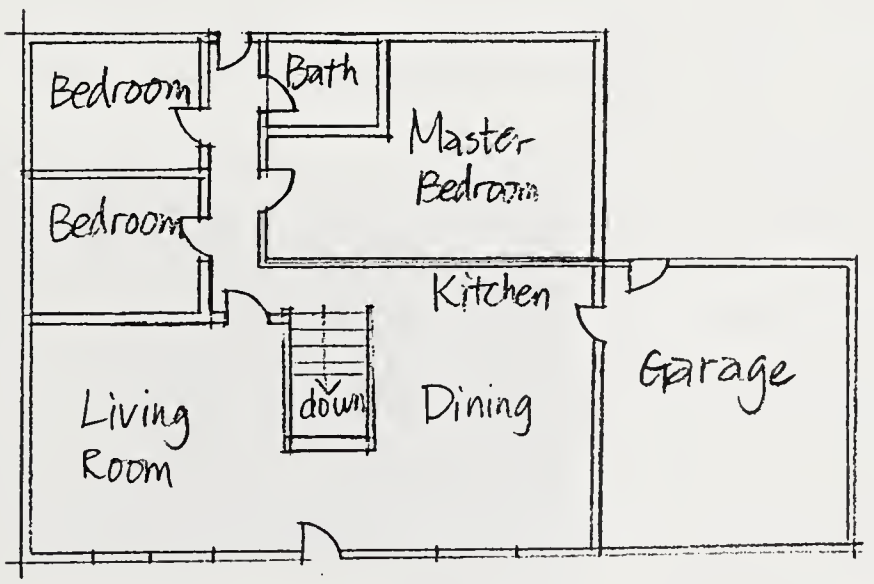


Figure 102. House and garden plan

12. Middle-class Image, 1998

Mr. Chen is a researcher at University of Wisconsin-Madison. His wife is the owner of the Shanghai Chinese Restaurant. Their daughter, seventeen year old, is a high school junior. The 20-year-old ranch house consists of three bedrooms and two bathrooms (Figure 103).

Figure 103. House and front yard

The Chen family subscribes to Chinese satellite TV. This was acquired for their grandparents when they visited and lived with them for a year. They came from Shanghai, one of the largest cities in China. Lots of people from Shanghai went abroad in the 1980s and 1990s. The daughter came to the United States with her mother when she was eight years old to join her father in Madison. She watched Chinese cable programs with her grandparents and learned Chinese idioms very quickly. She still speaks Chinese but gave up written Chinese. The cabinet under the TV stores hundreds of TV shows, soap operas and movies from Chinese cable, which they videotaped, nicely labeled and organized in sets. Laced white sheets cover the sofa for easy cleaning purpose.

The couple's photo, the daughter's picture and Chinese paintings are hung on the wall (Figure 104). The husband loves Chinese tea. He made special rice tea for me to taste. It has a special subtle rice fragrance never to be experienced on other occasions. Father and daughter usually talk in English. The daughter speaks fluent English without accent and she starts to look more and more like an ABC (American Born Chinese). She's very much into fashion and she has a basket with more than a hundred bottles of nail colors. Her favorite movie stars' posters are hung on the wall in her bedroom. She sang very well in Chinese when we had a Karaoke party (this has been a very popular

Figure 104. Chinese paintings on the wall

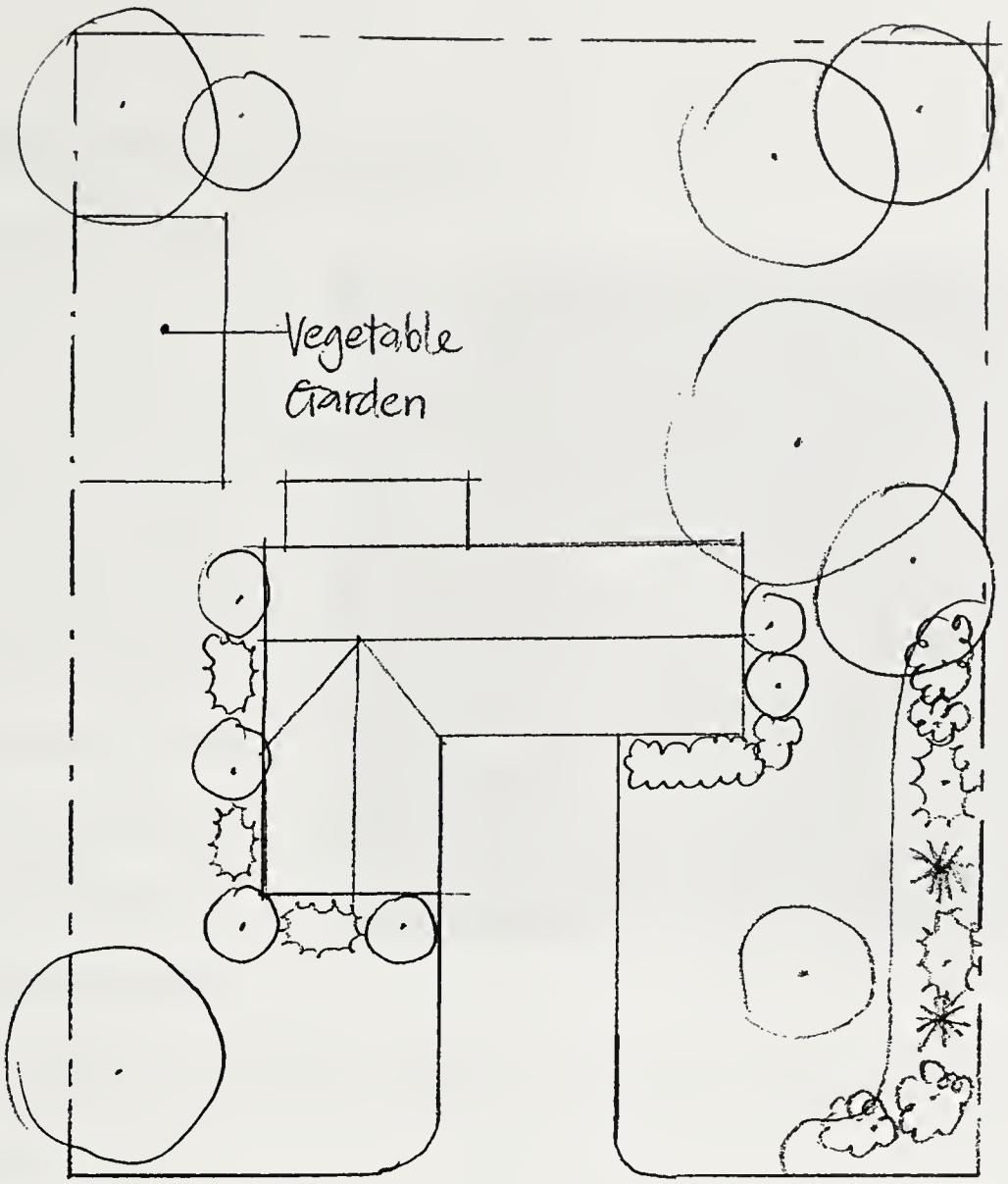
form of entertainment for Chinese since 1990). In the same way Americans go to a bar to relax and socialize, Chinese enjoy singing Karaoke with friends and family. They have a great collection of Chinese and English song Karaoke VCDs. The mom brought them back from her annual visit to Shanghai. The shelf in the living room displays a sculpture of Buddha. Several silk flower arrangements decorate the rooms. Warm red silk Chinese lanterns hang, from their Shanghai Restaurant. Traditional Chinese black wooden dividers with Chinese painting decorations separate the space for party and regular dining space.

The husband is very good at computers. The furnished basement has three computers networked together. Everyone has one computer and there's no need to fight for it. However, two generations live with two different life styles, worldviews and personal preferences. The couple still is very Chinese in some core part of their values and beliefs. The daughter is very modern, and very Americanized. She dresses, talks and thinks like an American teenager. There are constant value conflicts and confrontations in the house.

Compared to living condition in Shanghai, they are very happy about their house. Shanghai has the highest housing prices in China and a typical family only can live in a very cramped, small apartment. Before they purchased this house, the family lived in a one bedroom in a house close to campus.

They have become interested in gardening in recent years under experienced gardener friends' influence. The flowering garden adds year-round interests to the home (Figure 105). The vegetable garden provides home-grown fresh food, especially their favorite Chinese vegetables such as Chinese chard cabbage (bok choy), Chinese mustard greens, and true Chinese cabbage.

Figure 105. Flowering garden



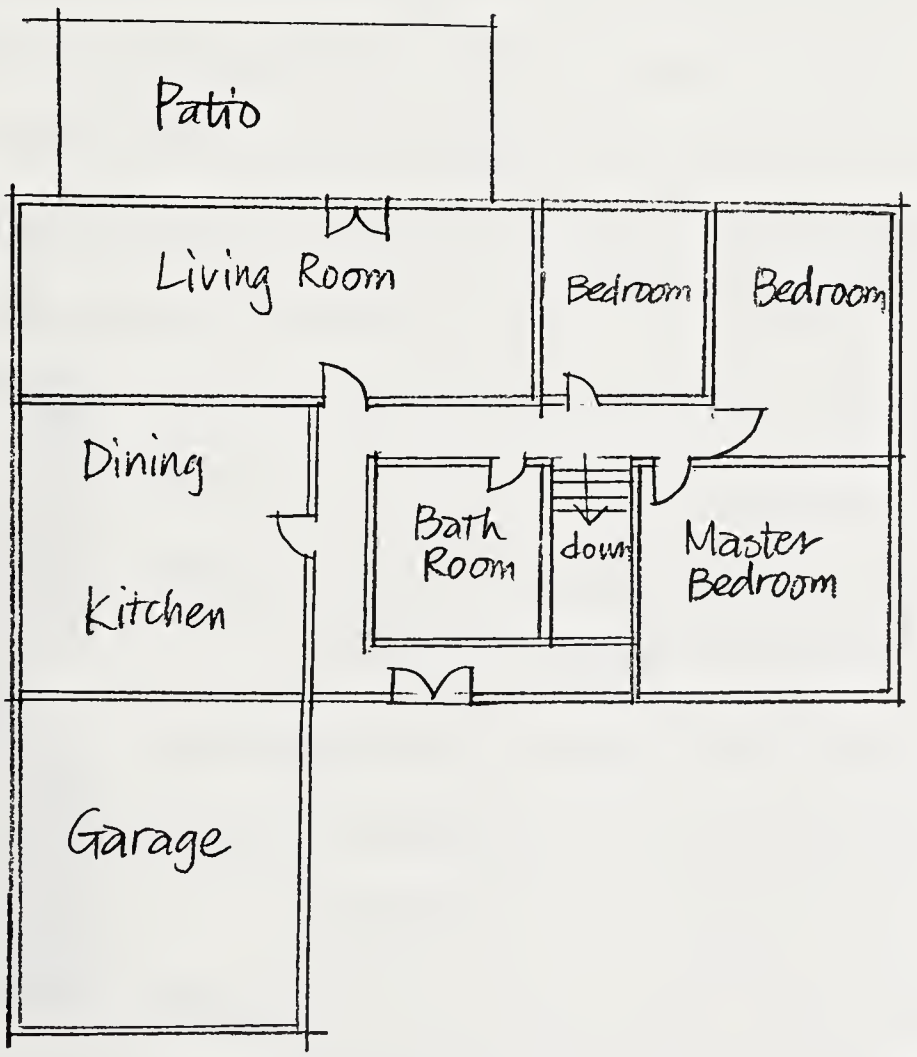


Figure 106. House and garden plan

13. Chinese-American Marriage, 1996

Jenny's from Taipei, Taiwan and her husband Jim is American. They have been married for nine years and have an eight year old son. Jim is the owner of a cable installation company. Jenny is a full-time housewife. She also occasionally helps with accounting of her husband's business, and volunteers at her son's school. Their ranch house has three bedrooms and two bathrooms (Figure 107).

Figure 107. Front yard

Front door entrance is decorated with a red Chinese character, which means "luck", and it is hung upside down. According to Chinese tradition, it means, "Good luck arrives at your front door" because "arrival" has the same pronunciation as "upside down" in Chinese.

On a shelf in the living room, Jenny's parents photos, a wooden Buddha sculpture, and Chinese and English books are displayed (Figure 108). The brick-thick Chinese dictionary set is often used when she needs to look up a reference or find a Chinese character. A Chinese calendar with remarks of lunar seasonal changes, and special days for marriage, traveling or moving, hangs on the wall.

Figure 108. Buddha sculpture

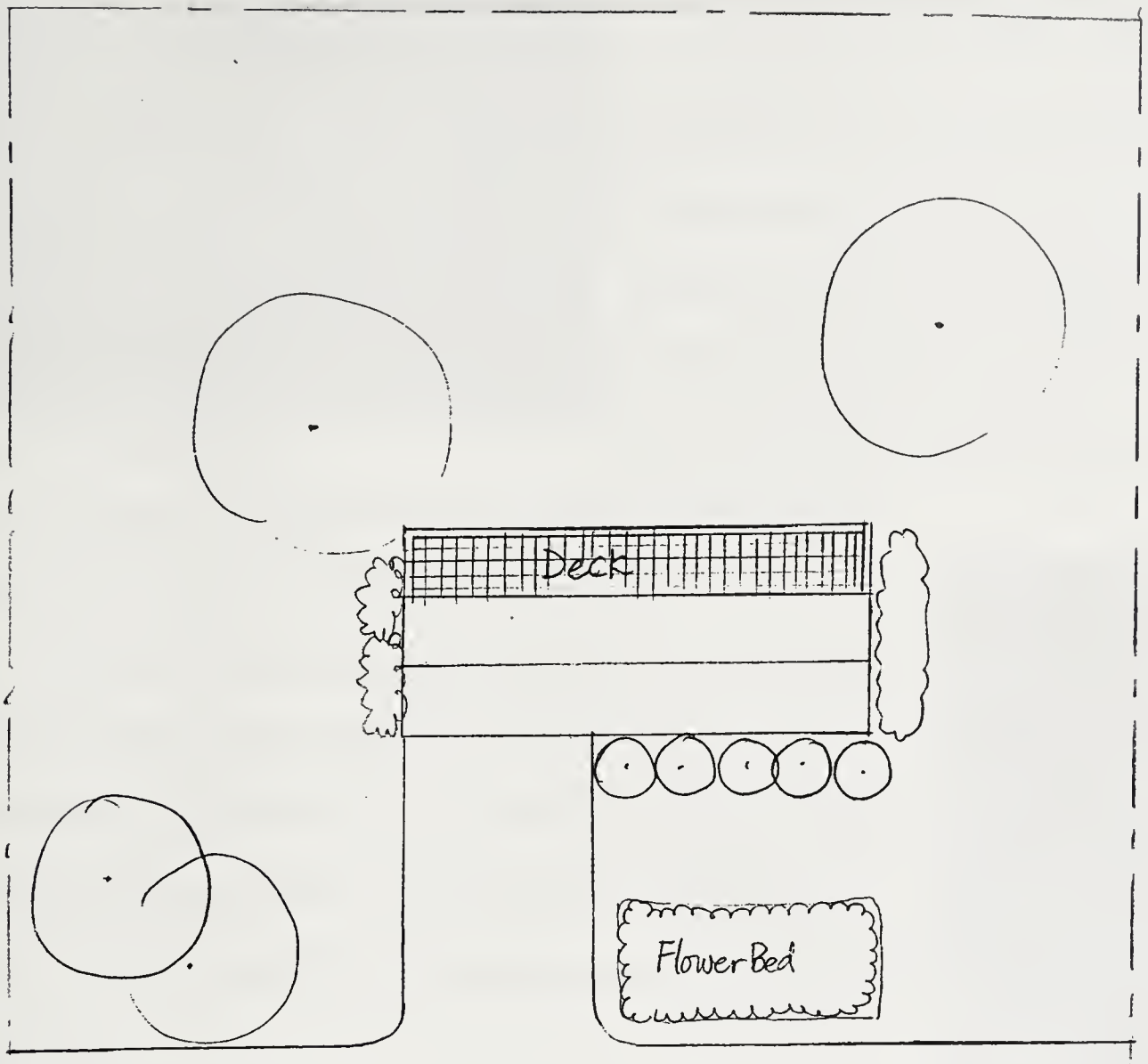
Jim and son do not like Chinese food at all and the family mainly eats American food. She rarely cooks Chinese food for herself, usually orders Chinese dishes from nearby Chinese Restaurant.

The basement is very open and largely unfurnished, mainly for storing kid's toys and doing laundry. Jenny hired household help, paying on an hourly bases, before adding a bedroom in the basement.

Figure 109. Blooming tulips

Now a live-in Chinese scholar helps with the housecleaning duties, and teaches their son Chinese in exchange for free room and board. Their son can not speak Chinese, but can understand a little bit Chinese. In his bedroom there is a whole bookcase of Chinese children's books, many sent by his grandparents.

She started to plant some tulips in the front yard under a gardener friend's influence and felt very happy to see flowers blooming (Figure 109). She's planning to add a herb garden soon.



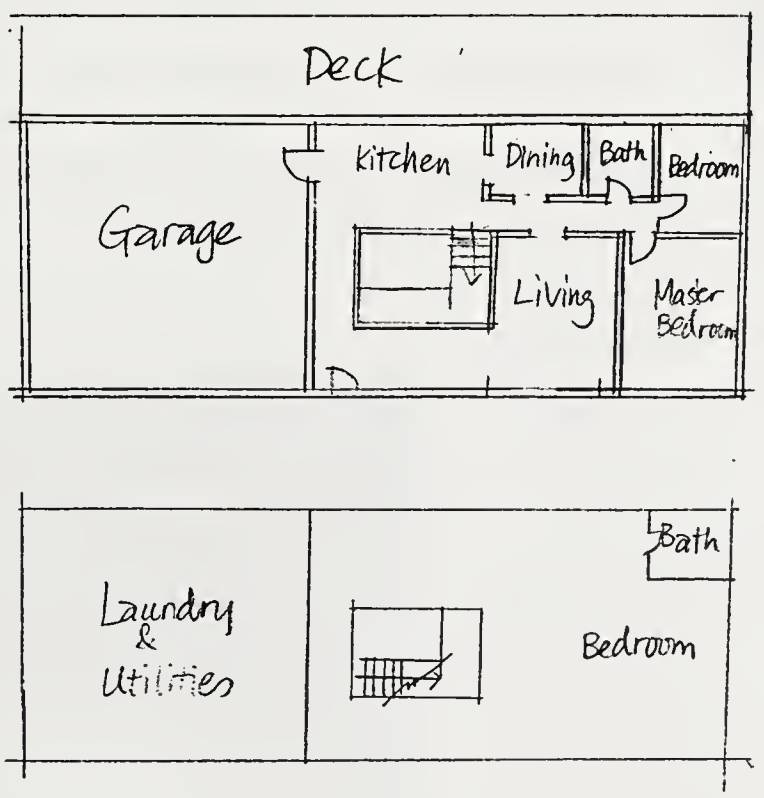


Figure 110. House and garden plan

Figure 111. House facade

14. Combination of East and West, 1998

Mr. Kuo, forty-nine years old, is the owner of the largest Chinese Buffet Restaurant and Bar in Madison. He's from Taiwan and is in his third marriage. Ms. Kuo is from Sichuan, China, thirty-one years old, and this is her second marriage. Mr. Kuo has an eighteen year old son and a fourteen year old daughter from his previous marriages. The couple has a new born son who is only 16 months old.

This is very spacious house facing south which is an ideal orientation traditionally preferred by Chinese (Figure 111). The personalized wallpaper incorporates Chinese calligraphy of words "dance" and "color" (Figure 112). The couple enjoys ballroom dance very much and their restaurant has a spacious dance hall for entertaining.

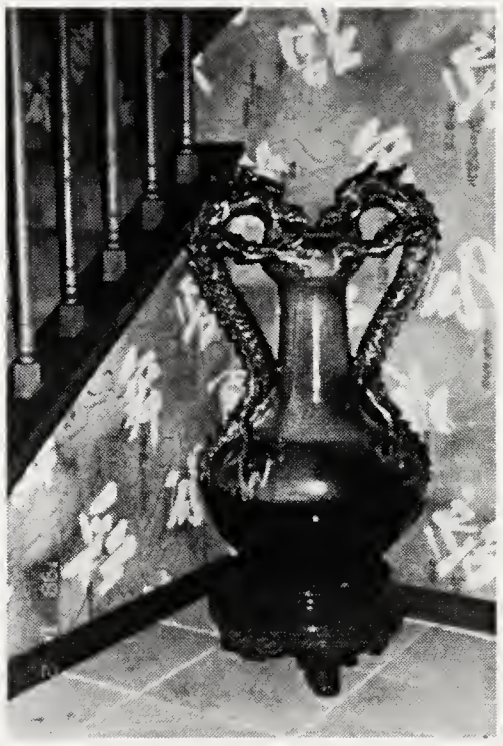


Figure 112. Wallpaper with Chinese calligraphy

There are two dining rooms in the house. The big one is for parties and for other important gatherings such as Chinese New Year and Christmas, decorated with silk flower arrangement and a cabinet displaying silverware collections (Figure 113 & 114). Creamy white laced curtains add a gentle touch to the atmosphere. The small dining room is for regular family dinner.

Figure 113. Formal dining room

The sunken living room has a fire-place, and several elegant sculptures of animals such as puma, antelope and horse (Figure 115 & 116). On the wall hang paintings of parrots. A large bouquet of silk flowers is arranged in a beautiful vase placed

Figure 114. Silverware collection

Figure 115. Sunken living room

on the table. It is very modern and western in spirit.

The family room is very welcoming and warm in tone, decorated in a log cabin style with a stone wall and wood log fireplace (Figure 117). A big screen TV shows Chinese cable programs. The view through the large windows leads you back to their deck and garden. The kitchen wall has an opening so when you work in the kitchen, you can still watch TV. They converted the laundry room next to the garage into their Chinese kitchen to prevent oily fumes and smoke from entering the rest of the room.

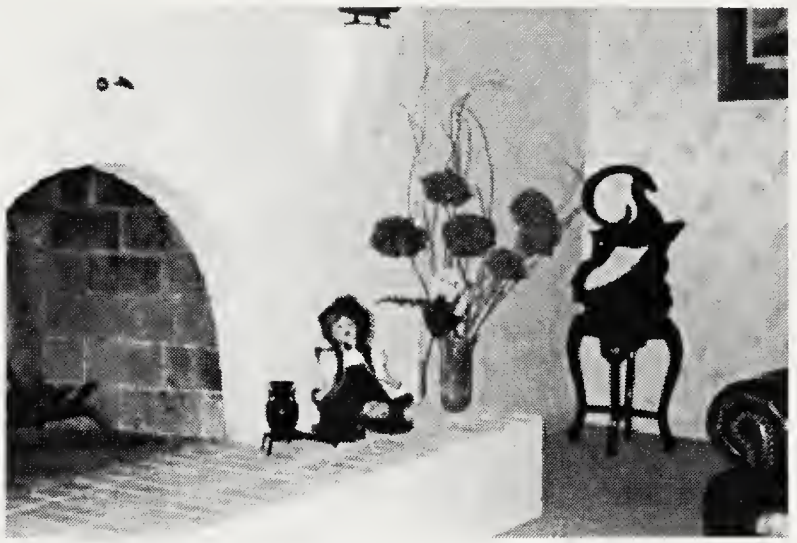


Figure 116. Animal sculpture in living room

Figure 117. Log cabin style family room

Upstairs there are four bedrooms. The master bedroom displays their wedding photos and a baby bed is nearby (Figure 118). A bookcase is indented into the

Figure 118. Master bedroom

Figure 119. Basement bar

wall with lots of Chinese books. A private bathroom is connected to the master bedroom. The daughter's room has lots of stuffed animals on a shelf. She also likes folding paper cranes.

The furnished basement has another large TV, a computer station, a bar, another bedroom with private bath, and a play area for the children (Figure 119). They have five cars.

Figure 120. Deck to the garden

The back yard's main attraction is a specially designed pond with wetland plants to serve as a wildlife garden (Figure 121 &122). Hundreds of Koi fish swim in the water, and ducks are constant visitors. Cattail plants provide homes for various birds.

Figure 121. Blue heron and cattail sculpture

Figure 122. View to the pond

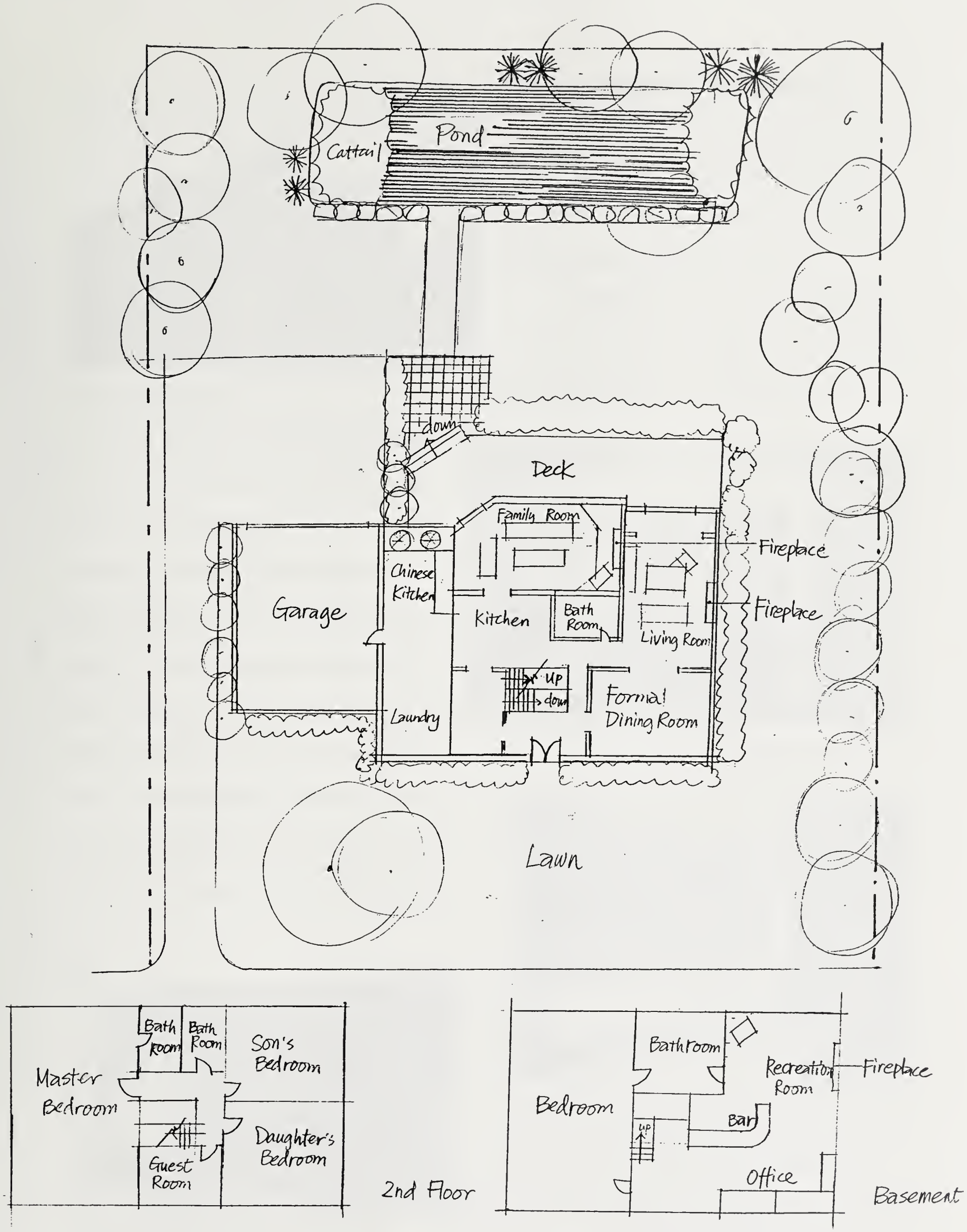


Figure 123. House and garden plan

Figure 124. Exterior view

15. Dream House of Buddhism, 1999

Among the homes I have interviewed, this is the only one that the owners were decision-makers in the lot selection, home designing and building process (Figure 124).

Jin family came to U.S. 15 years ago. Their son was born in Madison. Ms. Jin works as a software engineer in a local computer company. Her husband has been regularly retreating to a Californian Buddhism temple for studying Buddhism in recent years. Ten years ago, they didn't find a house that suited their needs, so they bought the lot and she designed the house, interior and garden all by herself. The whole family holds strong belief in Buddhism. Their house and garden truly reflect their religion, culture and life style. The first floor spacious living room is wide open and has no furniture except a Buddhism shrine

Figure 125. Buddhism shrine in the living room

Figure 126. Living room serves as meditation room

(Figure 125 & 126). It is mainly used as a Buddhism meditation practicing room, not only for the immediate family, but also for Taiwanese

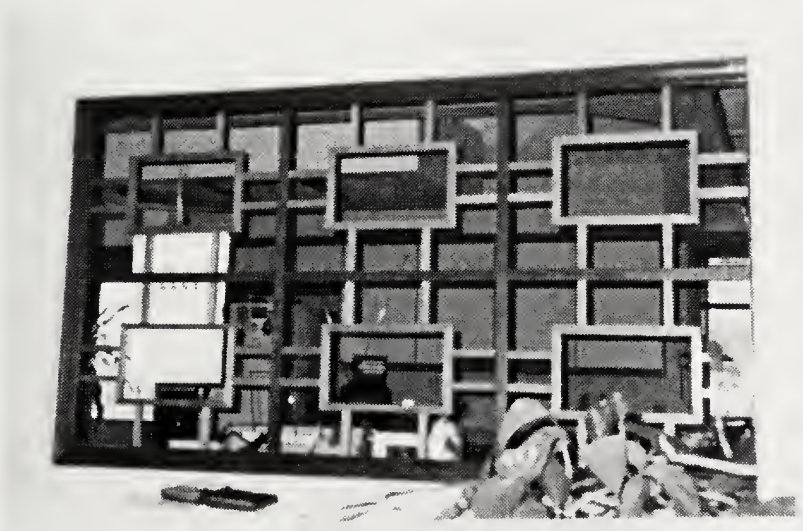


Figure 127. The design of wood window panel is derived from a traditional Chinese pattern

Figure 128. Buddhism shrine consists of paintings and sculptures of Buddha

Student Buddhism Study Group at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Every Sunday afternoon, about 12 members from the group will practice 2-hour meditation together here.

Inside and outside the house, simplicity is her goal. Specially designed wooden window panels which derived from traditional Chinese motif serves as a soft divider between living room and dining room (Figure 127). The skylight is decorated with the same wooden panel which evokes strong traditional Chinese atmosphere.

Figure 129. Lotus scroll in the master bedroom

She designed the shrine to face west- the sacred direction in Buddhism philosophy (Figure 128). Lotus is the most significant decorative elements of interior design. They hang a scroll

Figure 130. Lotus silk flower arrangement

Figure 131. Lotus light

Figure 132. Lotus window decoration

of Chinese lotus painting on the wall above the bed of master bedroom (Figure 129); lotus silk flower arrangement serves as a centerpiece on the coffee table (Figure 130); lotus lights are placed on the shrine (Figure 131); lotus window pattern for a bedroom decoration (Figure 132). Historically, lotus which represents purity out of dirt, peace, has embodied symbolic meaning in both Buddhism and Chinese culture.

There are many Buddha's paintings displaying on the living room wall (Figure 133). She has collected a series of Buddha painting from a famous Hong Kong painter (Figure 134). Downstairs there are many religious books (Figure 135).

Ms. Jin loves plants. She designed flower planters around the railing in the living room. She

Figure 133. Painting of Buddha

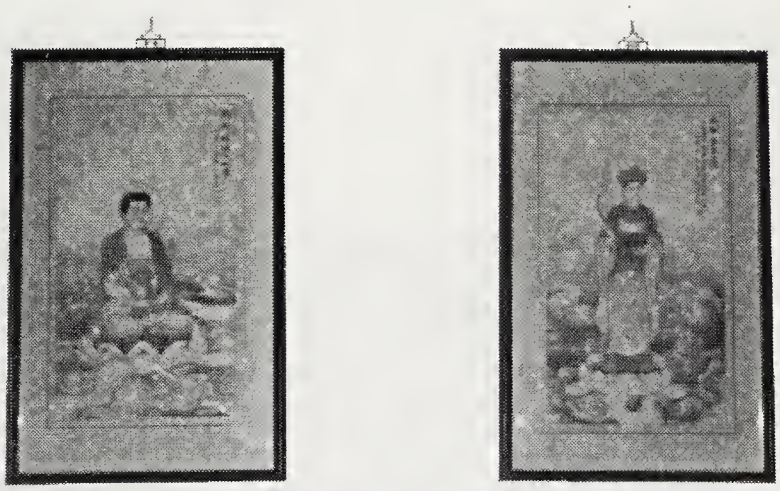


Figure 134. Special collection of Buddha paintings

Figure 135. Books on Buddhism

Figure 136. Flower planters symbolize Buddha`s arms

Figure 137. Potted plants

said the two enclosing planters symbolize Buddha's arms (Figure 136). Many green potted plants decorated the house (Figure 137). The backyard garden is primarily lawn, and is bordered by trees and shrubs. She likes the openness and peacefulness the quiet backyard offered. Their garden has a variety of plants such as roses, iris, tulips, petunia, black-eyed susan, and poppies (Figure 138). She just started a rock garden in the backyard and plans to add more plants every year (Figure 139).

Figure 138. Black-eyed susan

Figure 139. Rock garden

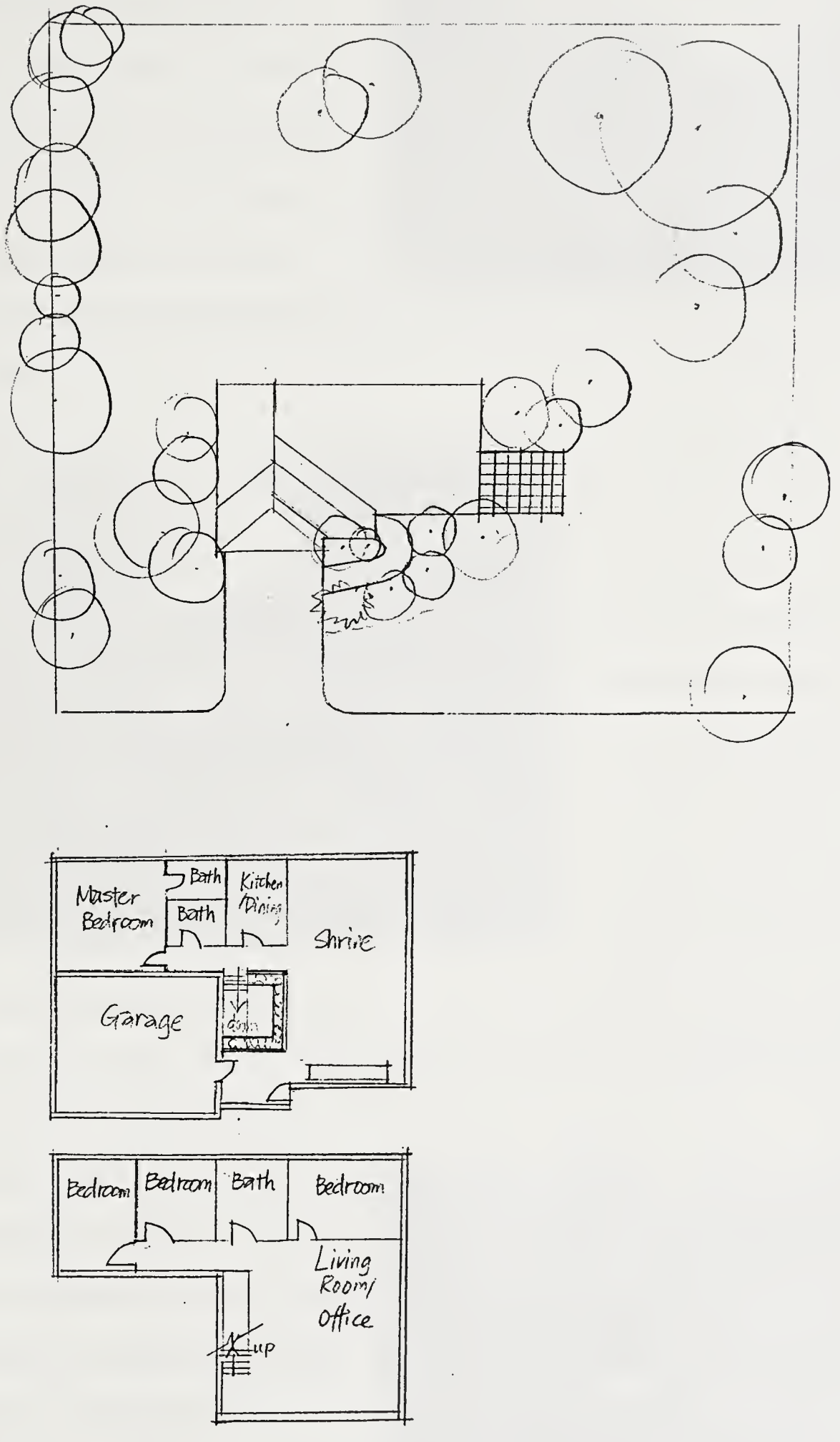


Figure 140. House and garden plan

16. Gardener's Delight, 1998

Linda is a research specialist at University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her elder daughter, twenty-seven years old, is a professional working in a private firm. Her twenty-four year old younger daughter is a college student. The house has five bedrooms and two bathrooms (Figure 141 & 142).

Figure 141. Front view

Figure 142. View from vegetable garden to the house

In China, they lived in low to medium density apartment buildings in Nanjing. They always lived on the first floor of the apartment buildings, so Linda could keep gardening as her hobby. Their several home gardens in Nanjing were full of roses, chrysanthemums, Chinese peonies, iris, poppy, grape vines, strawberries, cherry, and peach. Linda came to America in 1989 and two daughters joined her in 1991. Before they bought the house, they lived in single-family houses, a co-op, and apartments in Madison. They had a dispute with an apartment landlord because a midnight "flood" from the third floor apartment intruded their first floor home. They were very happy to move into their very first dream home.

Figure 143. Flower boxes on the deck

This is an 18-year-old split-level ranch

style house with a nice back yard garden. A spacious wooden deck overlooks the garden and nearby park. Beneath the deck is an enclosed porch with large windows and cozy bamboo chairs. Flower pots and blossoming window boxes embody the wood railing in spring and summer (Figure 143 & 144). A beautiful floral umbrella and

Figure 144. Spring and summer flowers on the deck

glass table with comfortable chairs is perfect for enjoying barbecues on the deck, afternoon sunshine, and bird watching (Figure 145 & 146). A mature maple tree provides shade and brilliant fall color. Bird feeders hang between the branches with several wind chimes swinging in the wind.

Figure 145. Barbecue on the deck

Both daughters' Chinese paintings, water-color paintings and oil paintings are hung on the wall of the living room (Figure 147). Six different kinds of windchimes are hung from the ceiling along the picture window. A large mirror facing the entrance is believed to square off the irregular L-shape of the house. Many family photos are displayed (Figure 148). There are also several angel vases with dry flowers hung on the wall as

Figure 146. Quiet retreat on the deck

Figure 147. The daughter's painting

Figure 148. Family photos

decoration. A fish tank, collections of Chinese crafts, and daughter's doll collection are on the displaying shelf in the living room (Figure 149).

Figure 149. Fish tank and doll collection

Figure 150. Orchids

Many potted plants flower in the house throughout the season. Linda especially loves orchids. In China, orchids are very expensive and she never had the luxury to plant them. Now she has her beautiful collection of a variety of orchids (Figure 150).

Linda is mainly responsible for decoration decisions. She is very artistic herself. The unbelievable hardship she endured from her 42-year life

Figure 151. Plant used as a decorative element

Figure 152. Plants decorate the bedroom

experience in China made her very adaptable to the open and free American life style. She loves the freedom of choices here.

Linda changed the kitchen and dining room carpet floor to linoleum to make the floor cleaning much easier, even if she cooks Chinese food in the house. She commented that she uses the dining room most of the time she is home, reading the Chinese and English newspaper. She also bought a gas tank set in the garage to cook really oily Chinese food. A downstairs tool and storage room has been converted to a fifth bedroom. Then she started a home business, adult-family home in 1997. The house has been renovated and remodeled to fit the needs of elderly such as bathroom 'wall grabbers', and so on.

Figure 153. Blooming Amerilily in the living room

The interior decoration of the master bedroom is very special. A set of black furniture is designed to incorporate the beauty of circle. The headboard of the bed is a half circle, while the mirror of dressing table is designed as a big full circle. Simple yet very impressive! The various flowering plants are a major attraction in the house (Figure 151, 152 & 153). It is like a flower

show year round. Her indoor plants include various orchids, fuchsia, begonias, cyclamen, African Violets, jasmines, English ivy, devil's ivy, arrowhead plant, Chinese evergreen, plumosa fern, asparagus fern, spider plant, red-margined dracaena, Boston fern, rubber plant, weeping fig, etc. Linda has a fantastic "green thumb". She also practices Tai Chi, a popular form of Chinese exercise, in the backyard regularly. A new family member-a Keeshond dog, called Tasha, is the adorable baby in the house.

Linda enjoys spending considerable amount of time working in her gardens. Every year, she plants many annuals and perennials to add vibrant colors and seasonal interests to her garden. Since she moved in, she has started three front yard gardens (Figure 154, 155 & 156). The first one is nearby the sidewalk, full of roses, peonies, tulips, globeflowers, grape hyacinth, lamb's ears, and irises. The second one borders the facade of the house with colorful roses in between evergreen shrubs and yucca. When you approach the front door, the third garden embraces the entrance to the house with bright colored annuals such as marigolds and perennials such as irises and bleeding hearts (Figure 157). The white-laced borders not only define the edge of the gardens but

Figure 154, 155 & 156. Front flowering gardens

Figure 157. Bleeding heart embraces the front entrance

also successfully unify the garden appearances. She keeps planting throughout the seasons, and her front gardens have evolved through years and always been a pleasant showcase for neighbors and passersby.

Her side yard is a terrace garden with asters and herbs. The back yard consists of a vegetable garden, a flower garden, and an orchard (Figure 158). She established her vegetable garden the first year she bought the house (Figure 159). She plants the family's favorite vegetables and fruits such as various Chinese greens, tomatoes, snow peas, soybeans, peppers, cucumbers, lettuce, chives, green onions, squashes, kohlrabi, grape vines and strawberries (Figure 160). She fenced the vegetable garden to keep off the rabbits. Everyone in the family enjoys picking up the fruits and

Figure 158. Peach tree is full of peaches

Figure 159 & 160. Vegetable garden

Figure 161. Planting pear trees in the orchard

vegetables in the summer.

A flower garden underneath the pine trees is full of peonies, day lilies, iris and chrysanthemums. In winter, the green pine trees provide the skeleton of the garden against the heavy white snow. From spring to autumn, her flower gardens attract the most attentions. A stone birdbath and a water fountain provide water to the birds.

Linda has started an orchard three years ago in her backyard. She adds fruit trees such as peach, apricot, pear, plum, and cherry every year (Figure 161). The peach tree has produced many delicious peaches for two years. All these add to her pleasure of gardening.

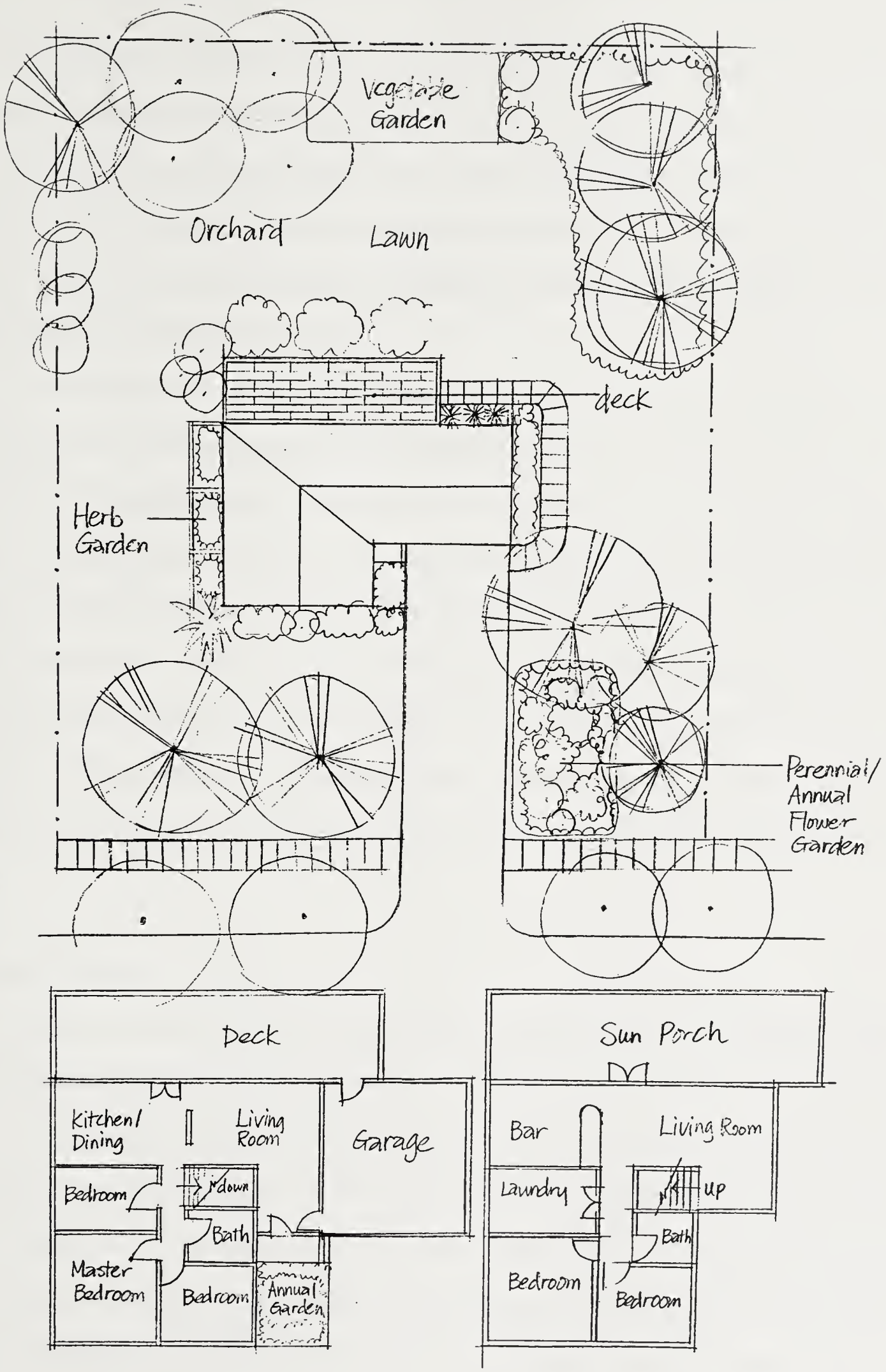


Figure 162. House and garden plan

Chapter Six: Constructing and Expressing Identity in Dwellings

Compared to the Chinese immigrants from late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the current generation of Chinese immigrants are a very different socioeconomic group.

Older generation Chinese immigrants were usually self-employed, living closely and densely in China Town. Their small business such as laundry stores and convenient stores targeted Chinese customers. They were not fluent in English, and living in proximity with other Chinese provided smooth transition to the alien environment.

The new generation of Chinese immigrants, mainly work in American firms, University, and state government. Some are business owners of Chinese restaurants, motels, and elderly assisted-living facilities. They target largely American customers. Not only they work very closely with American colleagues, but also they live in typical neighborhoods and communities with American neighbors. They are interested in the democratic political structure and process, and actively engage in social events of American society. The United states is now a less racially segregated country, and provides a better macro-environment for immigrants to melt into the mainstream culture. It is evident that the new generation of Chinese immigrants are better educated, have significantly better socioeconomic status in the American society, and are better integrated and assimilated into the core culture.

Housing Preference

In general, the interviewees are satisfied with their home environments in Madison. This is the first time that their "American Dream" came true. Especially for those from China, they came from a country without private land ownership to present day American land ownership, it is a very special milestone in their life journey. They enjoyed the spacious living conditions and garden lovers enjoy the garden spaces. In the process of purchasing a house, Chinese immigrants consider these factors the most important criteria that guide their decision-making: location of the house, the price, and safety. They want to make sure the house is in a good neighborhood and community with increasing real estate values. Majority of the middle-class families bought a house with a price range

from $90,000 to $150,000. Only very few families bought houses above $200,000. The most popular architectural styles are ranch and bi-level. This preference also speaks about the utilitarian middle-class value.

According to feng shui principles, hills and water views are signs of prosperity, and they are preferred by most Chinese-Americans. Traditionally, Chinese prefer a south facing home. However, in America, houses are built almost in every directions because of the road layout and other conditions. Do Chinese-Americans have strong preference regarding the house orientation? The answer is no. In general, it is great if the orientation of the house is south facing. Otherwise, these Chinese-Americans are flexible with the house orientation.

The cultural differences that exist between mainstream American culture and traditional Chinese culture are also evident in the process of purchasing a house. For example, there is a sharp contrast between group orientation and individualism. People from Chinese culture are more group oriented than most Americans. Interestingly enough, Chinese usually consult with their friends when making decisions about buying a house. A Chinese buyer may arrive with several relatives or friends, and decisions are made within the group. On the contrary, in American eyes, purchasing a house is a very personal choice and should remain private. Responsibility for decisions lies with the individual. My interviewees also brought up the issue that they are totally new to the process of buying a house. After several tours by the realtors, they felt embarrassed to bother the realtors any more and bought a house rather quickly compared to their American counterparts.

Housing Adjustment and Adaptation

In China, domestic space does not correspond to a precise function. Usually multiple uses are designated to the same room. Functions of the space are unclearly defined. Furniture is moved from one room to another, tables are mobile, and the size of the table may be changed. However, in America, further differentiation of rooms has been developed and emphasis is placed on specialization. There is a clearly fixed relationship between space and function. Each room has a designation corresponding to the usage attributed to it.

The family is not passive in its interplay with its home environment. In fact, the family makes efforts to redress the discrepancies between the home it has and the home it and others feel it should have. Discrepancies produce residential dissatisfaction. When the dissatisfaction becomes strong enough, the family will make adjustments. For instance, some families have decorated the basement as a recreation room or an office, others added an additional bedroom to meet family's needs. If housing adjustment and adaptation do not work for the family, conflicts can result.

One special feature of adaptation to the space was modification of the garage or laundry room into a second kitchen for cooking Chinese food (so that smoke from the cooking would be eliminated from inside the house). Eight families had this changes in their homes. This makes it necessary to design a domestic environment flexible enough to allow life style changes without undergoing major modifications.

Decorating the interior of a home is a never-ending process. However, the achievement of self-expression is tempered by the fiscal constraint. For instance, Linda's future home improvement plan includes converting part of the wooden deck into a greenhouse for her fifty indoor plants, to protect against the long Wisconsin winter seasons. Zhou family wants to expand their kitchen. Due to their limited budgets, these plans were post-poned.

Figure 163. Bedrooms are highly territorial spaces

Western culture respects and encourages privacy, and Chinese immigrants now have the ability and luxury to define it. According to my research sample, bedrooms, usually less elaborate and decorate, are perceived as the most private space inside the house (Figure 163). Only close friends and relatives will be invited into the bedrooms. This finding is similar to the American scenario that bedrooms are highly territorial spaces. On the contrary, almost all the living rooms I have visited are very well decorated and highly individualized, reflecting the personality and taste of the owner. The living rooms are also highly used by all the family members.

Interior Decoration

Personal and group identities are expressed in interior decoration and gardening practices. The function of personal-identity management is evident in individual and group personalizing and decorating of their territories. A major function of personalizing and marking places that one occupies or owns is to express, establishing and maintaining self-identity. Human territoriality is a vehicle by which people extend their personalities and values onto the physical environment and thereby achieve a sense of self-identity.

Figure 164. Westernized interior decoration

One way Americanization is manifested is through interior decoration of homes. For example, most well-educated professionals' homes have a more modernized style and flavor. Their living rooms were attractive and westernized, usually with a beautiful carpet on the floor and abstract paintings on the wall (Figure 164).

Symbolism plays a hidden role in personalization and only cultural insiders may decipher the secret language. It is very common to find patterns on walls or objects displayed have symbolic meanings in Chinese culture. Many decorative patterns are believed to bring good fortune for the family. For example, pine tree represents longevity and endurance. Phoenix and dragon signify balance of *yin* and *yang*, and a happy couple. Lotus symbolizes endurance and uprightness (Figure 165). Water ripples means wealth and heavenly bliss. Clouds represent heavenly blessing and wisdom. Flowers signify wealth (Figure 166). Tortoise and crane represent longevity. Old coin means wealth, and bat

Figure 165. Silk lotus represents endurance and uprightness

means good luck because bat has a same pronunciation as "luck" in Chinese.

Personalization is also evident in the cars people drive. Most Chinese prefer Japanese car, and Toyota Camery and Corolla are their favorite choices. Some families also have Toyota or Suburu wagons in addition to typical sedans. Many have personalized license plates read in Chinese that they will have great fortune on the road such as "LEE 168"[3]. Inside the car, some use seat covers to prevent the seats getting dirty. They usually hang various Chinese lucky objects such as a Buddha icon, a good luck symbol.

Figure 166. Silk flower arrangements signify wealth

According to Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981), the meaning of objects is derived from the interaction between the intrinsic qualities of objects and the person in a larger social-environmental context. Meaning changes as people's lives evolve. A person's past memories, present experiences, and future dreams are inextricably linked to the objects that comprise his or her environment. In the following section, meaningful objects of the surveyed homes are examined using the categories of Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981).

A. Meaning of Objects

1. Objects for instrumental purposes

These objects are mainly for utilitarian needs, such as clothes, plants, household tools, and

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[3] Numbers have special cultural meanings and different connotations too. According to Taoist philosophy, odd numbers are *yang* (male) and even numbers are *yin* (female). Four has a similar pronunciation as death in Chinese thus is avoided by Chinese. House numbers that contain fours are more likely rejected by many Chinese. Five is a lucky number due to the association with the five elements of nature. Eight is a very lucky number because it has a similar pronunciation as prosperity. Nine is a very popular number in Chinese culture, which associates it with longevity and dragons.

so on. Big screen TV's are common entertainment devices in homes I visited. Some families even have two big screen TV's. Computers and internet uses have strong influence at home. Most of the Chinese-American families have at least one computer at home. They use the internet at home on a daily basis. Some have scanners, and color printers hooked up too. Several families even have two or three computers networked so everyone can have one without any argument. They also use email to communicate with relatives and friends in China. Besides popular American software like Microsoft Office, Internet Explorer, Netscape, PhotoShop, PageMaker, Freehand, and Illustrator, they also have various Chinese software installed. That allows them to read and send Chinese emails to friends and family members in China. Their internet surfing has a tendency of using both English and Chinese web sites. Some commented that computer technology has overcome the hardship that long-distance communication used to affect our lives, it's never been easier to know the news in China instantly and to easily reach a friend in China via email. Most families have a fax machine, mainly for communicating with family members in China. Some also use their fax machine for business. Some families add a second phone line for exclusive fax or internet uses. Another popular household item is video camera. Families use their video cameras to record vacations in exotic places, their son and daughter's high school or college graduations, weddings and other important family events.

2. Objects as embodiment of values or ideals

These objects are an embodiment of cultural or personal values, ideals, or beliefs. Religious books were most often mentioned as a means of learning the wisdom and the meaning of life (Figure 167). Mr. Lee read Buddhist scriptures and feng shui books, which had special meaning for him. Chinese books, Chinese paintings, and Chinese crafts were found to be closely connected to the owner's cultural sense of continuity and identity (Figure 168, 169 & 170).

Figure 167. Religious books

Another interesting discovery is that almost every family I

Figure 168. Horse decoration derived from a famous Chinese painter's work

Figure 169. Chinese batik wall hanging

Figure 170. Chinese painting

visited has a satellite installed, which allows them to view TV and movie channels from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Most of the families have Chinese satellite installed, but very few families subscribe to American Cable TV. The majority of the families have had their satellites for several years. Some bought it for grandparents when they visited Madison. Because they usually did not speak English well, this helped to entertain them and avoided them getting homesick. It is not only a nostalgia comfort for elderly grandparents to watch Chinese TV programs, but also a special classroom for younger generation to learn Chinese effectively.

Most families subscribe to the Chinese newspapers published in the United States, their local English newspaper (the Wisconsin State Journal, or Capital Times), and popular magazines (National Geography, Times, Newsweek, Money Magazine, and Kiplinger's Personal Finance Magazine).

Most families bought VCD or DVD players in recent years. They brought back quite a collection of Chinese movie and karaoke Chinese song discs, from their trips to China. Originated from Japan, karaoke is a very popular entertainment that many Chinese enjoy. You sing into a microphone, while a video plays, with the words to the song are shown, verse by verse, across the screen. Several families host karaoke parties, and friends stay late singing and having fun. They usually mix Chinese and English songs.

3. Objects as manifestation of achievement

The objects that represent the end product of a person's devotion of energy or hobby, such

as awards, paintings, degrees certificates, flower collection, doll collection and so on.

4. Objects as extension of memory

These objects serve as a link to a person's past life experience. Examples include photos of family members, diary, etc.

5. Objects for social exchange

Posters on the wall, photographs on display, that can easily function as a topic of conversation (Figure 171). Objects such as letters, gifts given by others, or photographs of families and friends became tangible manifestations of people's love and friendship with their significant others.

Figure 171. Posters and photography as objects for social exchange

In Linda's living room, a daughter's prize-winning watercolor painting of Chinese vernacular architecture was hung on the wall. It can easily become a topic of conversation.

6. Objects as extension of self

These objects embody symbolic meanings that represent the core self. Boundaries between self and object are blurred. For instance, Linda who had a "green thumb", spends much time watering her plants and working in her gardens (Figure 172 & 173). Her front yard rose garden, perennial garden, and backyard vegetable garden are very beautiful all the year round. When

Figure 172 & 173. Linda enjoys working in her garden

Figure 174. Linda's indoor plants

flowers blossomed, she felt very happy and part of her self was growing and blossoming with them too. The fifty or more potted plants at her home also represent her strong love and respect of nature (Figure 174).

Linda's younger daughter has a great collection of VCD discs for Chinese and English karaoke. She always has a dream of becoming a singer. She brought back hundreds of discs from her trip back to China and enjoys having friends over singing karaoke together.

Another example was the stuffed bears of Ms. Chen. At the time of interview, she just got divorced, and hugging those bears might indicate the way she wanted others to comfort her.

B. Changing Meanings of Objects in Environmental Transitions

1. Objects for maintaining personal historical continuity

Examples are diaries, photographs, Chinese music tapes, stuffed animals, favorite books, and various personal collections (Figure 175).

Figure 175. Wedding photos

2. Objects for maintaining environmental continuity

To avoid threatening people's sense of self, they incorporate those features of the old setting into a new environment to reflect the place-identity characteristics of the old familiar places. People not only brought old stuff, but also made an effort to replicate its location in the new setting. For example,

several families from rural China brought family shrines and Chinese goddess statues with them and continue to perform the worship ritual.

3. Objects for maintaining social continuity

These objects function as the presence of the absent others, such as letters and photos of family members and friends, treasured gifts from old friends, etc.

4. Objects for maintaining cultural continuity

These objects serve as a place of release from the alien environment. Functional objects brought from the home country might acquire new significance. For instance, reading Chinese books to get new knowledge and comfort feelings (Figure 176). Reading Chinese newspaper every-day. Internet surfing for Chinese news and magazines articles. Listening to Chinese classical or popular music, as condensation of Chinese culture.

Figure 176. Bookshelf full of Chinese books

Chinese calligraphy is the one art that integrates with the daily life of the ordinary Chinese people as well as the more educated elite. From the oracle bones to the present day Chinese new year red couplets, calligraphy is appreciated and treasured by all Chinese. The couplets expressing the calligrapher's wishes in life have very special meanings to my interviewees. Many of them brought their calligraphy with their luggage to the United States (Figure 177).

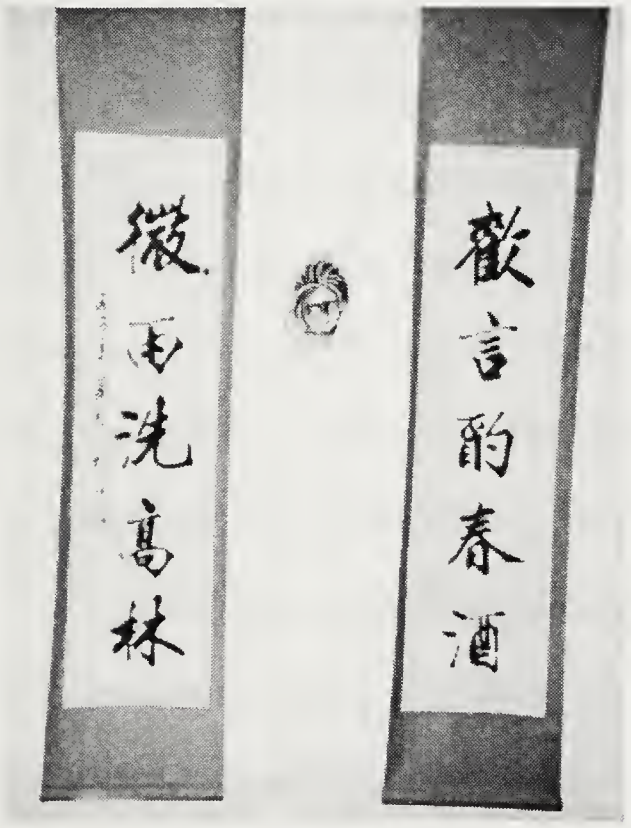

Figure 177. Chinese calligraphy

Gardening Practices

The Chinese-American families maintain a typical American front lawn at their homes, especially in the front yards. Some landscape designs including perennial and annual flower beds add variety and color to the front entrance. Most front yards are not fenced, some have fences bordering their backyards mainly for children and pets' safety.

Figure 178. Chrysanthemums in a home garden in Nanjing, China

In China, a home garden is always fenced and enclosed. This controls other people's access and provides more privacy for the family. A lawn is not a common home garden theme. This may be because in traditional Chinese eyes, a lawn is just a patch of grass without a utilitarian function. Instead, Chinese people plant a variety of flowering plants, fruit trees and vegetables in their gardens (Figure 178). This is done not only for fragrances and esthetic appeal, but also for the delicious fruits and fresh organic vegetables they provide for themselves and friends.

Chinese immigrants like the openness of the American front yard. The continuous lawn of the neighboring houses appears to form a beautiful green carpet, as if every home is nested in a park setting. However, these Chinese immigrants are not used to lawn care and lawn mowing chores. They soon discover that beneath the beauty of the green lawn is the hard work and tremendous cost of maintaining a perfect lawn. They struggle with weeds, and maybe even question the convention of the lawn as an acceptable front yard norm.

They like the idea that garden produces fresh vegetables for the household, however, they are unwilling to make a bold statement in their front yard, because Chinese usually worry too much about how others think about them. They are afraid that if they give up lawn area and make it a flower garden for example, their neighbors will complain about the disruption of the neighborhood image, and it may affect their home value when they sell their houses in the future. As a compro-

mise, they maintain the front lawn largely unchanged (maybe only add flower beds close to the house), flower lovers turn to their more private back yards to express their love of nature and utilitarian needs. An experienced gardener usually changes the design of the back yard garden within a year (Figure 179). They add perennials, annuals, and flowering fruit trees to the landscape (Figure 180). They establish vegetable gardens that produce an abundance of favorite vegetables in summer and fall (Figure 181). The majority of the vegetables they planted are commonly found in China. This behavior has an obvious connection to their past life experience in China. Some families even have friends bring Chinese vegetable seeds to Madison with them so that they can plant them in their vegetable gardens. Some tried to grow bamboo here, but bamboo did not survive the severe cold winter in Madison.

Figure 179. Gardeners enjoy transforming their backyards

Figure 180. Plants are added to the gardens every year

These backyard gardens do not have a distinctive structure. All the families I interviewed actively engage in gardening. Common elements found in the gardens include birdbaths, bird feeders, fence, fountain, and sculpture. Most popular vegetables found in the vegetable gardens include various Chinese greens, tomatoes, green peas, peppers, and cucumbers.

Figure 181. Vegetable garden

In general, the Chinese immigrants

gardens are not a strong and distinct reflection of traditional Chinese gardens at all. Partially because the potential cost involved with a classical Chinese garden is very high. Other reasons might be that it is very hard to reproduce materials and objects frequently applied in the Chinese garden, such as special stones and pavilions. Perhaps, the most important explanation is that these Chinese immigrants try to melt into the American culture and western life style consciously. They appear to avoid the traditional Chinese garden design and Chinese philosophy on purpose. They position themselves at the crossroad where East meets West. Their self identity reflects a mix of cultural traits and values both from China and America. Their garden's loose form and close resemblance to the typical American gardens may be a true manifestation of their self image (Figure 182 & 183).

Figure 182. Climbers in the garden

Honoring the natural world and its impermanence is the core aesthetic. Spring, real spring with its radiant beauty, has very special meaning to people who reside in the colder regions. Garden lovers of Madison find ample compensation for their long winters in spring gardening efforts (Figure 184 & 185). The first crocus blooms signify the approach of spring in Wisconsin. Their gardens bring them brilliant blossom — rich, inspiring and invigorating. There are a variety of explosive bulbous plants in these gardens ranging from snowdrops, iris, tulips, crocus, daffodils, to hyacinth. Popular garden annuals found in the gardens are impatiens, phlox, zinnia, marigold, petunia, geranium, salvia,

Figure 183. Stepping stones in the rock garden

alyssum, morning glory, pansy, dahlia, aster, larkspur, etc. Most commonly found perennials include roses, crocus, daisy, peony, iris, hollyhock, columbine, aster, clematis, coreopsis, cornflowers, bleeding heart, hydrangea, purple cone flower, lily, daylily, hosta, and lupine, and so on. Clematis are indeed joyous plants, and provide blossoms of every hue. Rose, chrysanthemums, peonies, poppies, cone flowers, lilies, daisies and lilac are some of the typical flowers one might find in the common American garden. They attract passing birds and their beautiful blooming periods give an almost constant brush of color to the gardens.

Figure 184. Gardener's paradise

The popular plants that the Chinese immigrants used to plant in China include peony, rose, iris, dahlia, oriental poppy, lily, daylily, spider lily, gladiolus, morning glory, hydrangea, pansy, salvia, hollyhock, hibiscus, pink, chrysanthemum, jasmine, azalea, forsythia, lilac, etc. There are definite popular plants they continue to grow in their gardens in Madison such as roses, peonies, iris, chrysanthemums, daylilies, gladiolus, jasmine, azalea, etc. There are indoor plants they keep growing at home just like in China, such as plumosa fern, asparagus fern, spider plant, jasmine, fuchsia, etc. Their vegetable garden includes Chinese cabbages, Chinese greens, cucumbers, peppers, tomatoes, lettuce, peas, chives, squash, zucchini, green onions, etc. This helps provide an environmental continuity to their core self. Cultivating familiar flowers contribute to making their dream house a sweet and comforting home.

Figure 185. Rock garden

Orchids are butterflies of the vegetable world, and the most envied of tropical plants. A collection of tropical orchids and their hybrids is largely a hobby of the rich, since their requirements and maintenance are costly. Many of them are so rare as to be almost priceless, and in a manner these are in the same category as masterpieces of painting, porcelain, and other art objects. Orchids are especially remarkable for the curiously varied shapes, elegant fragrances, and colors of their flowers. A collection of orchids is a dream come true to Linda.

Cultural Continuity

An analysis of a resident's past helps to investigate the evolution of the intimate ties existing between residents and their homes. The information reveals the temporal dimension of residential life in creation of social identity. It seemed to me that their residential history, personal taste, and religious practice likely affected the interior decoration of their homes. For example, the families from urban areas decorated interior in a more urbanized way: they preferred harmonious color schemes and the elegant interior style. However, the families from rural areas tended to choose bright color combinations and folk-custom flavor, and the furniture arrangement was affected strongly by feng shui practice which they believed in according to their past practice.

A. Feng Shui

Feng shui is invaluable for an understanding of oriental space, form and time. The application of feng shui to the modern western homes is profound and interesting. Today Chinese- Americans reinterpret this venerable art of placement for their western life style. For instance, it is a common practice that many families decorate their living rooms with large mirrors to elevate positive life energy or to square off irregular

Figure 186. Mirrors are used to generate positive chi

Figure 187. Using mirrors

building shapes (Figure 186 & 187). Other widely used feng shui objects found in my interviews include windchimes, bells, crystal balls, silk flowers, plants, and fish tanks (Figure 188 & 189). A very distinct example of feng shui practice is Lee family. His family holds strong belief in feng shui philosophy and has been practiced feng shui since they were in China. The family has much more involvement in feng shui practice than any other homes in my sample. In Lee's home, an abundance of calligraphic and pictorial symbols elevated interior detail beyond mere ornamentation; rather, it was a manifestation of searching for good fortune.

B. Chinese Philosophy and Religion

The teaching of Confucianism emphasizes moral doctrine in world affairs and social relations. The Chinese cosmology has long been influenced by Confucian philosophy, which has deeply impacted vernacular architecture styles in China. Confucianism was the driving force of the orderly and hierarchial development of Chinese classical architecture and city planning. On the other hand, Confucius also respected modesty and human good-heartedness. He had a famous saying that "the wise that takes pleasure in water, the kind that finds happiness in a mountain". This saying undoubtedly encouraged his followers to seek moral discipline and self-improvement amid the creations of Mother Nature. Mountain and water, are indeed two essential landscape elements used in Chinese garden design over the course of history.

Figure 188. Silk flowers in a Chinese vase

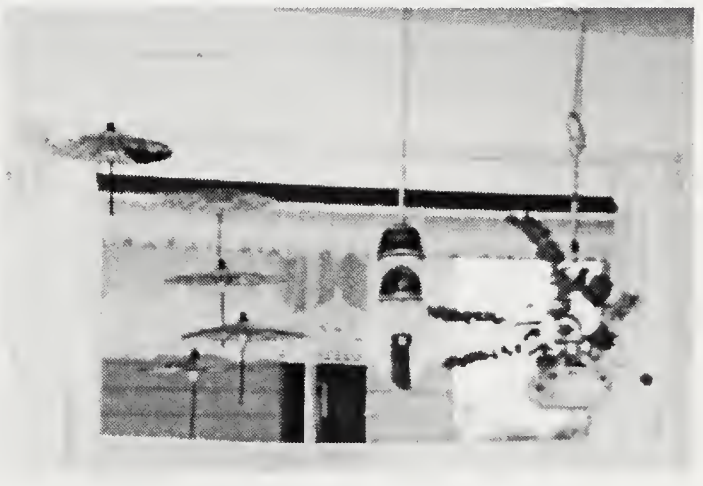

Figure 189. Windchimes and bells

Many important aspects of interior decora-

Figure 190. Family altar brought from China

tion in my sample are influenced by traditional Chinese philosophy. For example, the careful positioning of each accessory—from silk screen to scroll—invokes the meditative feel. Guests are asked to leave their shoes at the door, as if to signal their departure from the rushing world. Another practice is related to family altars. As we know, the relationship between death and design is commonly thought in terms of public monuments. However, domestic spaces also reflect the cultural customs of dealing with death and ancestors at a more personal level. The expression of loss in American residences tend to be far less visible—maybe several silver-framed photographs. On the contrary, family altars are traditionally prominently displayed in Asian homes, especially families from rural China. Among sixteen families I interviewed, five families have family altars in their homes (Figure 190 & 191).

Figure 191. Traditional Chinese goddess

Figure 192. Buddhism shrine consists of Buddha statues

Figure 193. Various Buddha statues

Buddhism is popular and influences people's life-style. Many families such as Jin and Lee families have a sacred place — a Buddhism shrine at home to worship for Buddha (Figure 192 & 193). Reading Buddhist scriptures to reflect on their own conditions is a daily routine for some people too.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions

Psychologically, the Chinese in Madison are living in two drastically different cultures. After many years of experiencing life in the United States, they have accepted American values but still find it difficult to fully be a part of American society. Physical proximity to the core culture, both in the working and living environments, has separated them from a dependence on other Chinese. In the process of finding balance between the two cultures, many of their own cultural traits have been modified. The first-generation Chinese immigrants will probably live in two cultures for the duration of their lives, no matter how close their physical proximity to the core culture is or how high their socioeconomic status is. Although their cultural values and behaviors have been modified substantially in some aspects through time as a result of their extensive contacts with the core culture, they will in all probability retain the essence of their own native culture.

Generally speaking, since all interviewees enjoy the spaciousness of their dream houses, and especially the freedom to personalize their houses and gardens, they were satisfied with their single family residences in the United States. They are gradually adapting to the western life style. All families are taking great advantages of the newly available technologies such as email and internet. They believe that the use of new technology has greatly enhanced their family life and contributed to a better quality of life. Although their life is intense, they enjoy more freedom, a better work environment, a spacious home and garden, a better income, the convenience and affordability of cars, exposure to diverse cultures, and opportunity to fulfill personal dreams. I found that location, housing price and safety are the most important criteria for the Chinese's decision to buy a house. Good relationship with neighbors contributes to their sense of community. Privacy helps make a house a comfortable home.

Identity Dimensions

By comparing the interior and exterior decorations and gardens of these sixteen homes, I have found a pattern that reflects the owners' social and cultural identity in the personalization of the home environment. Identity is dynamic in nature. There are different dimensions of identity. Per-

sonal identity describes who we are and what we want to be. Cultural identity speaks about our ethnicity and cultural practices. Social identity reveals our social status in the society. The interior and exterior personalization reflects their emerging personal, cultural and social identities. There is also a temporal dimension of identity. We change our identity as we grow and mature. Especially for Chinese-Americans, the concept of "self" inevitably changes as they make transitions from experiencing cultural shocks when they just arrived to facing constant challenges of life once they settled down. Being immigrants in a new western country, their emerging identity needs to find a balance between their past and current life. They try to adapt to Western way of life, while not completely losing their Chinese cultural roots. To them, decorating a house and working in the garden are making a new house their new home for their new life. Their personalization reflects their unique past life experience, current way of life, and future dream.

Sociologists suggests that identity arises out of interaction within social worlds and more broadly within societies (Steinfeld, 1982). That explains why homes as primary symbols of identity are reflective of the owner's social world. The homes of Chinese urban families seem different from those of rural families. A large group of families from urban areas used to live in medium-density apartments in China and Taiwan. The interviewees of these families had college or graduate school education and are currently engaging in professional or academic work in America. They have much higher degree of cultural assimilation and live a more American way of life. Their personalized interiors usually do not reflect a very strong Chinese cultural heritage, rather, a more neutral representation without distinct eastern flavor. In general, their homes are more like American homes.

A small group of families represented a different image of Chinese immigrants' homes. These families are from rural China where three generations of the family used to live in a big house together. The husbands and wives only had a high school, or lower, education. They usually do not speak English well and engage in Chinese restaurant business. They have less contact with the core society, usually keep intact their Chinese rituals and cultural traits very well, and have a much less degree of cultural assimilation. Their homes have strong Chinese folk flavor, with a variety of Chinese vernacular posters, inscriptions and handicrafts as dominant decorative elements. More

importantly, every family has incorporated a family altar into the current home setting. They also follow feng shui practice to a greater extent than those from the cities.

Sparsely populated and widely dispersed, the small number of Chinese in Madison are engulfed in American society. With such close proximity, consciously or unconsciously, they have been affected by the American culture. Some people accept more, others less, or may even show varying degrees of rejection, especially when they consider their own cultural values superior. Most Chinese I talked to still think that their inherited social customs regarding the family unit are superior. They value the Chinese tradition of respecting and taking care of the elderly. They encourage their children to follow the Chinese tradition in building a happy family.

The Chinese-Americans I interviewed tend to retain a close family tie. In fact, the kids usually live with their parents even after they reach age eighteen. When grandparents visit from China and Taiwan, they live in the house with the rest of the families, typically from three months to one year. To relieve the grandparents' homesickness, most families started subscribing to Chinese Satellite TV. Later they found another benefit derived from watching Chinese TV programs: their teenager children learned many Chinese phrases, and showed much higher interest in learning Chinese language by watching TV with the grandparents. Satellite TV not only has become a bridge connecting Chinese-Americans back to the homeland, but also an inspiring classroom for the younger generation to learn Chinese language without stress.

According to Amos Rapoport (1982), the house varies from society to society in degree of importance as an indicator of identity. James Duncan (1982) maintains that individualistic as opposed to collectivistic groups usually affirm their social or personal identity through their houses. Homes are the hubs of our personal life, the center of our universe, and expressions of self. Home has long been more than simply a place of rest. It is indeed an image-maker and metaphor for personal agendas. Home delivers unmistakable messages to friends, relatives and passersby who we are and what we want to become. It is evident from my sample that identity is reflected on the home environment. From every decoration they pick and display, the way they arrange furniture, the house they buy, the expansion and adaptation they make, to the garden they cultivate, the

flowers, fruit tree, and vegetables they grow, identity is revealed in every detail in the home environment. All these elements of ordinary home environment are woven together to comprise the owner's distinctive set of traits.

Personalization in the home environment reflects these families' attachment to their home culture. They decorate the interior with Chinese crafts, Chinese paintings and calligraphy, Chinese books, posters of Chinese celebrity, and so on. Many families incorporate their family altar and Buddhist shrine into their current homes. Their interior decoration shows feng shui influence. They also tend to grow familiar plants and Chinese vegetables in their gardens. Yet personalization in the home environment also expresses the American part of their emerging identity. Especially those families of interracial couples have a more neutral representation in interior decoration. These homes do not have a strong Chinese flavor.

Some elements might be more important than others in reflecting identities. For instance, in the home of people who believe in Buddhism, religion is the dominant theme that ties all decorative efforts together. Jin's home speaks deeply about their belief, values and passion. Interior decorations are all centered around lotus and Buddha. The most striking feature is that the living room is mainly for Buddhism meditation practice and the Buddhism shrine is the only display in the room. Other dominant elements might be feng shui practice, owner's paintings, or green thumb's floral display in the house and garden. These families' homes are making bold statements about their true selves, and who they are and what they want to be. They are at a higher level of self manifestation: consciously, they are approaching the true meaning of not only identity, but also "self" at a deeper social-psychological level. Their houses, a more precise material representation of their spiritual selves, speak clearly their belief, passion, life style, and dream. The other families have not yet consciously defined their uniqueness, value and characters. They are at the beginning stage of identity manifestation.

However, from outside, it's very hard to discern these Chinese-Americans' homes by looking at the façades and the front gardens. Their appearance is just like any typically middle-class American homes. There isn't a strong image of their cultural heritage reflected on the outside of the

house at all. The lack of personalization outdoors, especially front facade and front garden, is maybe mainly because Chinese traditionally like to conform to the norm and do not want to be very different enough to draw attention upon themselves. It might also result from their eager to fit into the mainstream American society.

In general, these Chinese-Americans have dual identities: private and public. Private identity is mainly hidden from public, such as Chinese decorations inside the house. They maintain their ethnicity inside with no public display outside. They appear to avoid the "Chinatown image" that markets ethnicity as exotic. In fact, my interviewees reveal their cultural identity mainly inside the house through interior decoration, especially the décor of the living room. They pay much more attention to the decoration of their living rooms where they have the most expansive art collections and furniture. Their goal is to make living room the showcase of the house. For most of the families interviewed, the living rooms were highly individualized, reflecting the personality and taste of the owner. From my sample, the whole group shows its collective cultural identity with varying degrees by displaying their Chinese art collections and other decorative objects in their living rooms. They are expressive but not exclusive to their Chinese background. A Western wine bottle maybe placed side by side with a famous brand Chinese liquor bottle and other religious sculptures on the display-ing shelf. Living room usually display more Chinese crafts than any other rooms. Maybe because it is the place to welcome visitors; it is also the family hub and activity center. The display of Chinese arts functions as a reminder to their cultural heritage. Also people tend to decorate their environment with things they are familiar with. By decorating their current home with special Chinese art and crafts helps them to acquire a new meaning of their cultural roots in their daily life. Just being able to see and appreciate the traditional character and taste of these arts, connects them with their remote past in a new way. On the contrary, bedrooms were perceived as the most private space inside the house. They are usually less elaborate, more function-oriented rather than a showcase of the house. They speak a more inward language of self images that tends towards being relaxing, comfortable, and cozy. The bedroom is personal territorial space and only very close friends are invited there. With much less decoration, they are function-oriented rather than beings sites of display.

As a meaningful part of home, garden is also the manifestation of owner's cultural background and personal interest. All interviewees personalize their garden mainly through gardening practices. Their gardens are shaped by invisible cultural influences. The strongest connection to Chinese culture lies in their vegetable gardens. The cultural link is more evident in the plant species they grow in the garden and at home. Some plants are Wisconsin natives; majorities are the ones they used to be very familiar with back in China. People also reported that they fulfill their basic spiritual needs through satisfaction derived from working in the gardens. The happiness they experience goes far beyond the obvious rewards of harvest. This suggests that our need for gardens is a basic one, and it is preferred to provide a home garden space as nearby nature. A home will not be a true home unless you have a garden. Both garden and house are essential components that contribute to a more fulfilling sense of home.

Implications

Homeowners are demanding an inherent flexibility to allow for changing and adapting the domestic spaces. Perhaps, as designers, our biggest challenge is learning to truly interface with our clients, to understand their family life and values, and to form a strong partnership with them in order to meet their specific life style needs most accurately. Designers should focus on discovering the client's needs and developing the strategies to deliver the services that meet those needs. Greater understanding and sensitivity to the way that housing and identity interact in the context of specific cultures can contribute to the design of housing that nourishes rather than limits human life.

There are many implications from this study as to how we may apply to the design of residential environment that is tailored to Asian American's market. Because feng shui is followed to different degrees by many throughout East Asia, respecting feng shui principle about lot selection, house layout, and interior design will help to specifically target Asian buyers. For instance, Asian homebuyers prefer more powerful gas ranges to cook stir-fry meals. Providing a gas stove spits a flame much stronger than a traditional stove is ideal. Designing kitchen space with a restaurant-sized exhaust hood over the kitchen stove for drawing the greasy smoke and odors out when wok

cooking. Option of incorporating a first floor bedroom that comes with bathroom and a small refrigerator, designed for elderly grandparents who stay with the family at least part of the year and may not be comfortable climbing the stairs. They also like large storage space near the kitchen sink in which to store a 50-pound bag of rice. Whenever possible, houses should be oriented north to south. Here are some suggestions. All these special features can be done subtly, so from outside it would hard to tell this is an Asian American's home.

Do not place a house at the end of a cul-de-sac or a "T" intersection.

Do not have many angles in the layout of the home. Regular shaped or rounded corner floor plan is desirable.

Pay particular attention to the entrance to homes. It's the transition from the outer world and the mouth of life energy. Design a shoe storage cabinet in the front hall for people walk bare-foot indoors.

Staircases should not be placed directly facing the front entrance; they should be set slightly askew to protect against wealth from flowing straight out the front door.

Do not design doors to be seen from the front of the house to the back.

Do not place a bathroom over the front door so as not to flush out wealth.

Do not design the master bedroom over the kitchen as not to burn the marriage bed symbolically.

Use the very lucky number "8" but avoid unlucky number "4" in the address.

Give the owners the option of installing a karaoke microphone and small stage for leisure-time singing.

Conclusion

As we know, our visions of an ideal home environment is always evolving and changing. Homeowners are in the constant process of reinventing and transforming their domestic spaces. The degree of adaptation in my sample is not much. Only one home was designed and built by the owners themselves. Most families have been living in their homes for less than five to ten years. It is

the initial stage of adjusting and making a house fit their needs. Aesthetics and cost have been the key criteria for the ever-changing and evolving home improvement decision-making process. However, due to financial constraints and limitations, the majority of these middle-class Chinese-American homes I visited are at the beginning stage of self-manifestation. There are still many unrealized dreams yet to be fulfilled. With more financial freedom and ability, the personalization will definitely reach the highest level of portraying self and identity.

In conclusion, almost every home I visited is a powerful metaphor for their personal and group identities. These homes incorporate elements both of continuity and of change. Reflecting the owner's personal preferences and goals, the interiors make powerful statements about their emerging self-image and identity in American society.

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Appendix A. Interview Guide

Residential Experience
What type of dwelling did you live just before you move to this home? What kinds of different places have you lived both in the US and China /Taiwan? How satisfied were you with those residencies?

How long have you lived in this home? How satisfied are you? Do you enjoy living here? How long do you want to continue living here? Would you recommend this neighborhood to your friends if they were looking for a place to buy a house?

Privacy
Do you have enough privacy from immediate neighbors or from other members of your family? Do you feel more privacy in the American dwellings compared to those in China? Do you consider your current single-detached home a most private place to live?

Social Interaction
Do you feel a little bit lonely living in such a big house without many people around? Do you have any contact with your neighbors? To what extent you feel part of the neighborhood?

Meaningful Objects
What are some special things in your room and how do they reflect your personal history?

Hobbies
What do you do in your spare time? What are your hobbies? Is there enough space in your home for your hobby activities?

Personalization
Is there anything showing you are from China or Taiwan? Is there adequate daylight to grow house plants inside your home? Is there enough wall space to display pictures and personal items? Does your home allow your furniture to be arranged attractively?

Interior Changes
Are you satisfied with the appearance of the inside of your home? Do you intend to redecorate some part of your home? Why did you change your interior decoration? For need and to update, for change, for beauty, or for suiting your taste?

Perception
Are you happy with the design of your home? How adequate is the size of each room, such as bedroom, living room, kitchen, bathroom, or patio? Is the kitchen easy to work in and keep clean? Is there enough space for your children to play without getting in your way? What is the inconvenience of the design, and what do you think should change to fit your family needs?

Gardening Practice

What changes have you made to your garden since you moved in? What kind of gardening activity do you engage in? Did you design the garden by yourself? What kind of plants do you have in the garden and inside the house? Do you have a vegetable garden? What kind of vegetables do you grow? What kind of plants and vegetables did you use to grow in China and Taiwan? What's your future plan on your garden?

Demographic

How many people live in your home? Gender, age, occupation? Married, single, widowed, divorced, separated? How many years of schooling have you had? Were you from rural area or urban area?

Appendix B. Common Perennials in Chinese-Americans' Gardens

Garden Perennials	Common Name	Latin Name
	Roses	*Rosa sp.*
	Chrysanthemum	*chrysanthemum sp.*
	Oriental Poppy	*Papaver orientale*
	Peony	*Paeonia sp.*
	Iris	*Iris sp.*
	Hollyhock	*Alcea rosea*
	Columbine	*Aquilegia*
	China Aster	*callistephus chinensis*
	Clematis	*Clematis sp.*
	Coreopsis	*Coreopsis sp.*
	Cornflower	*Centaurea cyanus*
	Bleeding Heart	*Dicentra sp.*
	Hydrangea	*Hydrangea sp.*
	Purple Cone Flower	*Echinacea purpurea*
	Lupine	*Lupinus sp.*
	Daylily	*Hemerocallis hybrids*
	Hosta	*Hosta sp.*
	Painted Daisy	*Chrysanthemum coccineum*

Appendix C. Common Annuals in Chinese-Americans' Gardens

Garden Annuals	Common Name	Latin Name
	Impatiens	*Impatiens wallerana*
	Phlox	*Phlox drummondi*
	Zinnia	*Zinnia elegans*
	Marigold	*Tagetes sp.*
	Petunia	*Petunia x hybrida*
	Geranium	*Pelargonium sp.*
	Salvia	*Salvia splendens*
	Sweet Alyssum	*Lobularia maritima*
	Morning Glory	*Ipomoea sp.*
	Larkspur	*Consolida ambigua*
	Dahlia	*Dahlia Hybrids*
	China Aster	*Callistephus chinensis*

Appendix D. Common Herbs in Chinese-Americans' Gardens

Garden Herbs	Common Name	Latin Name
	Chives	*Allium schoenoprasum*
	Bay	*Laurus nobilis*
	Basil	*Ocimum basilicum*
	Coriander	*Coriandrum sativum*
	Sweet Marjoram	*Origanum majorana*
	Dill	*Anethum graveolens*
	Mint	*Mentha spicata*
	Thyme	*Thymus vulgaris*
	Nasturtium	*Tropaeolum majus*
	Tarragon	*Artemisia dracunculus*
	Sage	*Salvia officinalis*
	Rosemary	*Rosmarinus officinalis*
	Mustard	*Brassica juncea*
	Garlic	*Allium sativum*
	Parsley	*Petroselinum crispum*
	Ornamental Onion	
	Lemon Balm	
	Chinese herbs	

Appendix E. Common Vegetables and Fruits in Chinese-Americans' Gardens

Vegetables	Common Name	Latin Name
	Chinese Green	
	Tomato	
	Green Pea	
	Pepper	
	Cucumber	
	Chinese Cabbage	
	Kale	
	Lettuce	
	Chives	
	Spinach	
	Squash	
	Green Onion	
	Potato	
	Carrot	
	Chinese Mustard Green	
	Soybean	
	Kohlrabi	
	Corn	
Fruits	Strawberry	
	Grape Vine	
	Cherry	
	Pear	
	Peach	
	Apricot	

Appendix F. Common Plants Chinese Used to Grow in China and Taiwan

Garden Plants	Common Name	Latin Name
Perennials	Roses	*Rosa sp.*
	Crocus	
	Shasta Daisy	*Chrysanthemum x superbum*
	Peony	*Paeonia sp.*
	Iris	*Iris sp.*
	Hollyhock	*Alcea rosea*
	Oriental Poppy	*Papaver orientale*
	Aster	*Aster sp.*
	Clematis	*Clematis sp.*
	Cornflower	*Centaurea cyanus*
	Chrysanthemum	*Chrysanthemum sp.*
	Jasmine	*Jasminum sp.*
	Daylily	*Hemerocallis hybrids*
Biennials	Pansy	*Viola x wittrockiana*
Annuals	Salvia	*Salvia sp.*
	Morning Glory	*Ipomoea sp.*
Bulbs	Gladiolus	
	Dahlia	
	Canna	
Shrubs	Forsythia	*Forsythia sp.*
	Hydrangea	*Hydrangea sp.*
	Azalea	*Rhododendron sp.*
	Chinese Hibiscus	*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*
	Lilac	*Syringa sp.*

Appendix G. Common Indoor Flowering Plants in Chinese-Americans' Homes

Flowering Plants	Common Name	Latin Name
Flowering House Plants	Begonia	*Begonia scandens 'Glaucophylla'*
	Begonia	*Begonia semperflorens*
	The Patience Plant	*Impatiens petersiana*
	African Violet	*Saintpaulia ionantha*
	Peace Lily	*Spathiphyllum wallisii*
	Chinese Rose	*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*
	Calamondin Orange Tree	*Citrus mitis*
Flowering Pot Plants	Camellia	*Camellia japonica*
	Fuchsia	*Fuchsia*
	Geranium	*Pelargonium x hortorum*
	Chrysanthemum	*Chrysanthemum*
	Cyclamen	*Cyclamen persicum*
	Azalea	*Azalea*
Annual Bulbs	Hyacinth	*Hyacinthoides hispanicus*
	Daffodil	*Narcissus spp.*
	Tulip	*Tulipa spp.*
	Crocus	*Chamaedorea elegans*
Permanent Bulbs	Amaryllis	*Amaryllis*
Cacti	Cactus	*Mammillaria wildii*
	Peanut Cactus	*Chamaecereus silvestrii*
	Orchid Cactus	*Epiphyllum ackermannii*
	Easter Cactus	*Rhipsalidopsis gaertneri*

Appendix H. Common Indoor Foliage Plants in Chinese-Americans' Homes

Foliage House Plants	Common Name	Latin Name
	Chinese Evergreen	*Aglaonema modestum*
	Medicinal Aloe	*Aloe barbadensis*
	Asparagus Fern	*Asparagus densiflorus 'Sprengeri'*
	Plumosa Fern	*Asparagus setaceus*
	Spider Plant	*Chlorophytum comosum 'Vittatum'*
	Green Spider Plant	*Chlorophytum comosum*
	Variable Dieffenbachia	*Dieffenbachia maculata*
	Jade Plant	*Crassula argentea*
	Corn Plant	*Dracaena fragrans*
	Red-Margined Dracaena	*Dracaena marginata*
	Boston Fern	*Nephrolepis exaltata 'Bostoniensis'*
	Miniature Fittonia	*Fittonia minima*
	Rubber Plant	*Ficus elastica 'Decora'*
	Weeping Fig	*Ficus benjamina*
	English Ivy	*Hedera helix 'Hahn's selfbranching'*
	Prayer Plant	*Maranta leuconeura leuconeura*
	Parlor Palm	*Chamaedorea elegans*
	Areca Palm	*Chrysalidocarpus lutescens*
	Pygmy Date Palm	*Phoenix roebelenii*
	Panama Orange	*X Citrofortunella mitis(Citrus mitis)*
	Green Peperomia	*Peperomia viridis*
	Variegated Peperomia	*Peperomia obtusifolia variegata*
	Snake Plants	*Sansevieria species*
	Devil's Ivy	*Scindapsus aureus*

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